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Letters on the
National Institute.

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LETTERS

ON THE

NATIONAL INSTITUTE, SMITHSONIAN LEGACY,

THE FINE ARTS,

**AND OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.**

BY JOHN CARROLL BRENT.

WASHINGTON.
J. & G. S. GIDEON.
1844.

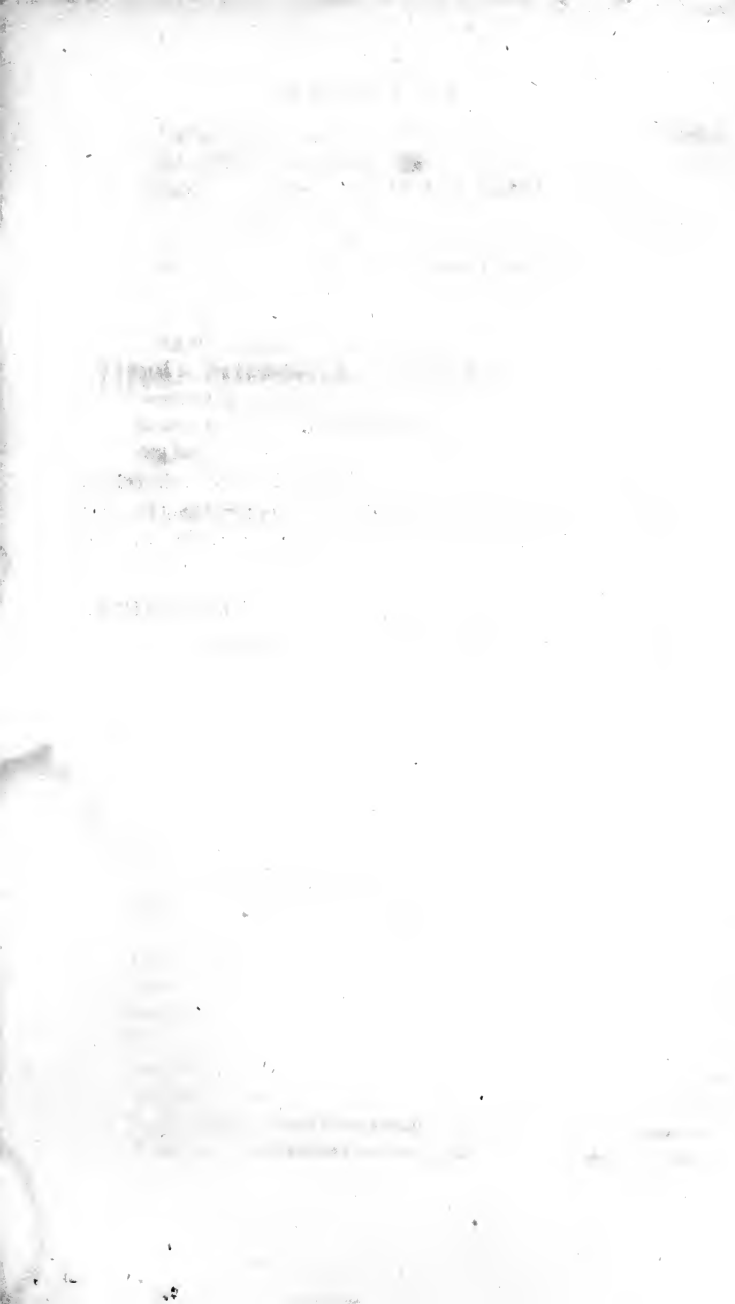
ENTERED, according to act of Congress, in the District Court of the District of Columbia,
this 1st June, 1844, by **JOHN CARROLL BRENT**.

DEDICATION.

This republication of the Letters recently inserted in the columns of the National Intelligencer, is dedicated to the Members of the National Institute, as a tribute of respect, by their fellow member and obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

WASHINGTON, *June 1, 1844.*



LETTERS.

SUBJECTS OF LETTERS STATED.

LETTER No. I.

WASHINGTON, *December 6, 1843.*

GENTLEMEN: It has appeared to me that the publication in your widely circulated journal of a series of articles on the National Institute, Smithsonian Legacy, and other matters connected with the interests of the District of Columbia, might be a desideratum at present, and calculated to do good here and elsewhere.

Fortunately for my project, which I have had in contemplation for some time past, and the execution of which I postponed until the meeting of Congress, the present President of the United States, in his last Message, has called the serious and favorable attention of Congress to the interests of this District. This appeal in our behalf has elicited from you the following well-deserved and appropriate remarks:

"We cannot dismiss the Message to-day, however, without expressing our gratification at the liberal terms in which the President has introduced into it the affairs of the District of Columbia, for which he is entitled to the sincere thanks of his fellow-citizens whose lot is cast within its limits. Let us hope that, in the exhibition of thoughtfulness and liberality towards this disfranchised District, the two Houses of Congress will not suffer themselves to be outdone by the Chief Magistrate."

The portion of the Message which called forth these remarks is as follows:

"I cannot close this communication, gentlemen, without recommending to your most favorable consideration the interests of this District. Appointed by the Constitution its exclusive legislators, and forming, in this particular, the only anomaly in our system of Government of the legislative body being elected by others than those for whose advantage they are to legislate, you will feel a superadded obligation to look well into their condition, and to leave no cause for complaint or regret."

That this warm and generous appeal may go to the heart of every member of the National Councils, to be followed by the desired results, should be the aspiration of every citizen of the District and true lover of his country.

Believing, then, that the present is the proper time for inviting and urging the attention of Congress and the public in general to the subject, and with such valuable recommendations as the foregoing, I deem it my duty, though an humble citizen of the District, to do my best in the good cause.

I propose, therefore, with your approbation, to devote a brief space to the History of the National Institute for the Promotion of Science, with such reflections as may be suggested by the treatment of the subject; to enter into some detail in relation to the National Observatory, under the superintendence of Lieutenant Gillis, of our Navy, and that of Georgetown College, assigned to the care of the Rev. Mr. Curley, both in course of construction; to urge the necessity, justice, and policy of some final and prompt action on the part of Congress in the matter of the Smithsonian Bequest, recommended especially by the President to that body, and the propriety and expediency of entrusting, under proper control, the execution of that sacred legacy to the National Institute; to show that the inhabitants of this District, if alive to their own interests and desirous of doing good to the community at large, should support and foster, by pecuniary and other aid, the said association, and throw their weight into any effort which may be made to obtain for it the life-giving notice of Congress.

Having treated these matters as fully as I may deem it necessary and appropriate, I shall then proceed to the discussion of other incidental subjects interesting to the District and the country.

In the performance of this duty it shall be my study to refrain from any remarks calculated to give reasonable offence in any quarter, and I shall carefully abstain from any allusion to the local or general politics now agitating the people.

I trust to be able to prove that a liberal policy towards this District, on the part of the Representatives of the Republic, will result in a permanent and real advantage to the whole nation; and that the outlay of money and fostering care asked for by our public spirited Chief Magistrate will redound to its honor as well as profit.

It is, therefore, from the impression that it is important for the people at large to have their notice attracted to the subject, and from the kindness and liberality with which you have opened your columns to scientific, literary, and general topics, that I have applied to you to aid me in the performance of my task. But, as your journal will be crowded with matter during the session, I shall take care to make my articles brief and to the point.

With this hasty sketch of my plan, I shall conclude for the present by observing that my next article will be devoted to a condensed notice of the National Institute; the examination of the expediency of its being entrusted with the execution of the Smithsonian Bequest, and

references to the excellent views of Messrs. Duponceau, Rush, Poinsett, and Preston on that particular point; and to the able and important correspondence of such men as Messrs. Adams, Wheaton, Cushing, Hodgson, &c., on scientific, historical, and general subjects.

I remain, respectfully, yours,

J. C. B.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE.

LETTER No. II.

WASHINGTON, *December* 16, 1843.

GENTLEMEN: In my last letter of the 6th instant, after having given a programme of the course I have determined to adopt in the treatment of the important subjects therein mentioned, I proposed to devote the succeeding number to a brief sketch of the National Institute, and the propriety, wisdom, and expediency of making that institution the agent for the execution of the objects contemplated in the bequest of Mr. Smithson. I now, therefore, in succinct terms, proceed to comply with my promise.

The National Institute for the Promotion of Science has now been in existence upwards of three years, having been founded in this city in the month of May, 1840, and incorporated by Congress in July, 1842. In order to give some idea of its progress and extension, I will content myself for the present with stating that it now embraces upwards of one thousand members, distributed as follows: 287 resident, 20 honorary, 32 paying corresponding, and 754 corresponding members. The Institute has upon its lists 17 corresponding American and 141 Foreign Societies; and all Governors of States, and diplomatic, consular, and commercial agents, who are not otherwise connected with the Institute, are considered as corresponding members *ex officio*.

The constitution of the Institute has divided the departments into eight: first, Chemistry; second, Geology and Mineralogy; third, Geography, Astronomy, and Natural Philosophy; fourth, Natural History; fifth, the Application of Science to the Useful Arts; sixth, American History and Antiquities; seventh, Agriculture; eighth, Literature and the Fine Arts.

The Institute, ever since its foundation, whilst gradually adding to the number of its members at home and abroad, has, in proportion, widened the circle of its operations and made friends in every section

of the world. In America, North and South, Europe, Asia, and Africa, it can point to distinguished names and ardent co-operators in the diffusion of human knowledge. Its library is swelling rapidly into importance; its cabinet is increasing daily in interest, and growing so rapidly as to preclude all possibility as yet of assorting and uniting the articles in one place; its bulletins, of which two have been published, give promise of great usefulness and increasing value; the correspondence embraced in those bulletins, and that which has found its way to the reading public for a long time through your columns, is becoming daily more extensive, interesting, and important. In a word, with but a limited means, and a small share, as yet, of that public confidence and support which it is so well calculated to secure, the Institute has succeeded in gaining an available reputation in this country, and in spreading its name to the four quarters of the habitable globe.

I find the words used by that distinguished scholar and statesman, the Hon. ABEL P. UPSHUR, our present able Secretary of State, in his circular, whilst head of the Navy Department, under date of June 28, 1842, so well suited to the subject that I feel called upon to insert them. Speaking of the National Institute, and recommending to our naval officers an active co-operation with its laudable objects, he says: "The
' design of the institution is to extend and diffuse all useful knowledge
' among men. In its character, it is national; in its objects, it embraces
' the whole circle of science and of the arts; and in its purpose, it looks
' to the civilization and improvement, and consequently to the happiness, of man wherever found. A design at once so comprehensive
' and liberal entitles it to the respect of the civilized world, and claims
' for it in a particular manner the fostering care and assistance of our
' own people."

If it be then, as it is in fact, in character, national in its objects; embracing the whole circle of science and of the arts in its scope; in a word, so vast and extensive, why should not the Institute, in a particular degree, be endeared to every lover of his kind, every true citizen of the Republic? Free from the charge of political bias and control, its members belonging to all the parties dividing the country—possessing the advantage of having in its ranks many if not most of the leading statesmen, scholars, and artists of the land—connected closely through its non-resident members with many of the first scientific and literary institutions in this country and abroad, and in correspondence with some of the most distinguished and influential men in Europe and Asia, no

association of public spirited gentlemen, for such good end, offers better inducements and fitter subject for popular favor and support. Examine every circular, bulletin, or other official publication of the Society; attend its regular and extraordinary meetings; investigate all its plans, proposals, and operations, and I venture to assert that a spirit of true patriotism and a strong desire of extending the limits and blessings of human knowledge and improvement, will be found to prevail amongst its members individually and collectively. As in the course of human events and the constant changes daily occurring in the views and fortunes of its members, a concurrent alteration is ever going on in those who are annually elected to preside over the destinies of the National Institute, no reasonable fear should ever possess the public mind that any permanent or serious abuse of power or trust could happen in the administration of its concerns. The officers of one year are often not those of the succeeding. An unceasing supervision is exercised over the acts of the Society by those members who are on the spot; and it is not at all probable that among so many highly respectable and disinterested individuals, not one of whom have any thing to gain or hope for, in a pecuniary point of view, by any impulse to the prosperity of the Institute, any set of men should be found to dream of putting their privileges or power to bad use. The hope and the wish of each member is, or ought to be, if he be worthy of the honor, to aid as far as in him lies in winning for his country a reputation for liberality in the patronage of the arts and sciences, and for a laudable ambition and success in the march of mind. He believes, or ought to believe, that every step taken in the onward path of civilization and refinement, is so much added to the strength and salutary operation of republican institutions. He desires to aid in erecting a neutral platform on which the citizens of of ther epublic may meet as friends and rivals in the intellectual struggle only, having cast from them as a load those political animosities which keep them so much estranged in the public arena. In a word, every member longs to make of his Institute a republic of letters, where the genial influence of an enlarged and liberal spirit shall reign supreme, and prove the assertion false of those who say that the muses, the sciences, and the arts cannot flourish under the sway of popular institutions.

It will be indeed a sad mistake, and cause for future regret and remorse, if we suffer such a noble institution as that which exists in our midst to pine away for want of notice and support. Now is the fit time for a well informed and intelligent community to come to the

rescue, and to redeem their character from the charge of indifference and neglect. A prompt and simultaneous combination in its behalf on the part of the citizens of the District in particular, and a responsive liberality in Congress to our appeal, would rescue the Institute from the embarrassed condition it is in at present, and enable it to enlarge the circle of its usefulness. That condition of pecuniary difficulty has been mainly produced by the desire of its members to make it better known and more generally felt. The scattered residences of those whose names are on its list, and the consequent difficulty, if not impossibility, of obtaining the amount of their subscriptions, have made it a hard matter for the Treasurer to meet the numerous and heavy demands upon him for the current expenses of the Institute. Must it then be said that an association, honored with the names, influence, and approbation of some of the best men in the country, the objects of which are so national and important—the constitution so liberal and appropriate—the operations so extensive and improving, shall not meet with the affectionate patronage of the people, for whose benefit it was established? Will the citizens of this District be so dead to their own interests and to the promptings of an honorable spirit, as to stand with their arms folded when so much is to be done, and so good an agent is presented? Will Congress, the honored servant of the people, refuse the small pittance we ask at its hands, and reject a course of action which must redound to the credit and advantage of the whole country? We most sincerely pray and trust that none of these things will come to pass; but that, supported by the influence of the people among whom it is established—cheered on by the approbation and good will of the country at large, and favorably received by the National Legislature, our young but public spirited Institute may realize the hopes of its most sanguine friends, and become what it was intended it should be, a national blessing, and an honor to the Republic at home and abroad.

In my next I shall dwell upon the proposed alliance of the Institute and the Smithsonian bequest, and until then I am, gentleman, respectfully yours,

J. C. B.

ON THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE.

LETTER No. III.

WASHINGTON, *Dec. 23, 1843.*

GENTLEMEN: In my article, published in your paper last Monday, I gave a brief notice and eulogium of the National Institute. I shall

have occasion soon to return to that subject, in order to show that many great and prominent men in this country entertain a high opinion of its merits.

I propose devoting the present number to the notice of recommendations of several of our departed Presidents to Congress, on the subject of a National University, from General WASHINGTON inclusively; and take the occasion of thanking a valued friend, the author of an able article in answer to a speech on the Smithsonian Bequest, made the 24th February, 1839, by Mr. CALHOUN, in the Senate of the United States, for the valuable facts and arguments which assist me so much in my present purpose. The article, signed "Common Sense," appeared in your paper of May 16th, 1839, and I would advise such of your readers as may feel disposed to examine the subject, to consult that essay as one full of interest and correct information.

In calling to my assistance such venerable and powerful names as WASHINGTON, JEFFERSON, and MADISON, I shall make but little comment upon their writings, being convinced that what they have said on the subject of a National University must necessarily carry far greater force and persuasion to the public mind than any reasoning of mine. With these remarks I take up our first President, and find him discoursing as follows in his speech of 8th January, 1790, to Congress: "Nor am I less persuaded that you will agree with me in opinion that there is nothing which can better deserve your patronage than the promotion of science and literature. Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness. In one in which the measures of Government receive their impression so immediately from the sense of the community as in ours, it is proportionably essential. To the security of a free constitution it contributes in various ways; by convincing those who are entrusted with the public administration that every valuable end of Government is best answered by the enlightened confidence of the People; and by teaching the people themselves to know and to value their own rights; to discern and provide against invasions of them; to distinguish between oppression and the necessary exercise of authority; between burdens arising from a disregard to their convenience, and those resulting from the inevitable exigencies of society; to discriminate the spirit of liberty from that of licentiousness—cherishing the first and avoiding the last—and uniting a speedy but temperate vigilance against encroachments, with an inviolable respect for the laws.

“Whether this desirable object will be best promoted by affording aids to seminaries of learning already established, *by the institution of a National University*, or by other expedients, will be well worthy of a place in the deliberations of the Legislature.”

To this speech, so worthy of the wise and good man who deemed education essential to the existence and operation of republican institutions, the Senate made the following answer: “Literature and science are essential to the preservation of a free Constitution; the measures of Government should therefore be calculated to strengthen the confidence that is due to that important truth.”

President WASHINGTON again dwells upon his favorite subject, in his speech to the two Houses on the 7th December, 1796, and thus eloquently urges it on their attention:

“I have heretofore proposed to the consideration of Congress the expediency of establishing a National University, and also a Military Academy. The desirableness of *both* these institutions has so constantly increased with every new view I have taken of the subject, that I cannot omit the opportunity of once for all recalling your attention to them. The assembly to which I address myself is too enlightened not to be fully sensible how much a flourishing state of the arts and sciences contributes to national prosperity and reputation. True it is, that our country, much to its honor, contains many seminaries of learning highly respectable and useful; but the funds upon which they rest are too narrow to command the ablest professors in the different departments of liberal knowledge for the Institution contemplated, though they would be excellent as auxiliaries.

“Amongst the motives to such an Institution, the assimilation of the principles, opinions, and manners of our countrymen, by the common education of a portion of our youth from every quarter, well deserves attention. *The more homogeneous our citizens can be made in these particulars, the greater will be our prospect of permanent union; and a primary object of such a National Institution should be the education of our youth in the science of Government.* In a Republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? *And what duty more pressing on its Legislature than to patronize a plan for communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?*”

“Common Sense” says that a memorial signed by GUSTAVUS SCOTT, WILLIAM THORNTON, and ALEXANDER WHITE, Commissioners of the

City of Washington, was presented to Congress, praying for authority to accept donations for the establishment of a National University, and stating that the President had appropriated a square of ground in the new city, containing near twenty acres, for that object, and had himself offered a donation of fifty shares of stock, then supposed to be valuable, and which had cost him the sum of five thousand pounds sterling, to aid in the attempt. Mr. MADISON, chairman of a committee of three, reported on the 21st December, 1796, as follows: "That it is expedient, at present, the authority be given, as prayed for by said memorial, to proper persons to receive and *hold in trust* pecuniary donations, in aid of the appropriations already made, towards the establishment of a University in the District of Columbia."

If it was expedient at so early a period of our Government, when the people were less divided by sectional feelings than now, to establish a National University at Washington, how much stronger the inducement and necessity at present, having at hand a large sum of money bequeathed for that very purpose, costing the Government not one cent, to the execution of which trust its honor is pledged, and which comes with such patriotic, wise, and irresistible arguments as those of the "*Pater Patriæ!*"

"Common Sense" observes that various causes, the state of our relations with France, and the excited state of the public mind on many subjects of domestic policy, prevented the agitation of the subject during the short administration of JOHN ADAMS.

But we find President JEFFERSON using the following cogent and impressive language in his message of the 2d December, 1806. He thus speaks to Congress:

"Education is here placed among the articles of public care; not that it would be proposed to take its ordinary branches out of the hands of private enterprise, which manages so much better all the concerns to which it is equal; *but a public institution can alone supply those sciences which, though rarely called for, are yet necessary to complete the circle, all the parts of which contribute to the improvement of the country, and some of them to its preservation.* The subject is now proposed for the consideration of Congress, because, if approved, by the time the State Legislatures shall have deliberated on this extension of the Federal trusts, and the laws shall be passed and other arrangements made for their execution, the necessary funds will be on hand and without employment. I suppose an amend-

ment to the Constitution, by consent of the States, necessary, because the objects now recommended are not among those enumerated in the Constitution, and to which it permits the public moneys to be applied.

“The present consideration of a national establishment for education particularly is rendered proper by this circumstance also : that if Congress, approving the proposition, shall yet think it more eligible to fund it on a donation of lands, they have it now in their power to endow it with those which will be among the earliest to produce the necessary income. The foundation would have the advantage of being independent on war, which may suspend other improvements by requiring for its own purposes the resources destined for them.”

The attack on the Chesapeake, the embargo, non-importation, and non-intercourse acts, and the existing serious differences with Great Britain, forbade any legislative action, or any further attention to the subject on the part of Mr. JEFFERSON. But his warm recommendation of a National University confirms the high reputation he enjoyed as the friend of education, and should have great weight with every member of our National Council and every citizen of the Republic.

JAMES MADISON, a man, as we all well know, of enlarged and most liberal views in matters both private and public, though a strict constructionist of the Constitution, revived the question in his first message to Congress. He says : “Whilst it is universally admitted that a well-instructed people alone can be permanently a free people, and whilst it is evident that the means of diffusing and improving knowledge form so small a proportion of the expenditures for national purposes, I cannot presume it to be unreasonable *to invite your attention to the advantages of superadding to the means of education, provided by the several States, a seminary of learning, instituted by the National Legislature within the limits of their exclusive jurisdiction,* the expense of which might be defrayed or reimbursed out of the vacant grounds which have accrued to the nation within those limits.

“Such an institution, though local in its character, would be universal in its beneficial effects. *By enlightening the opinions, by expanding the patriotism, and by assimilating the principles, the sentiments, and the manners of those who might resort to this temple of science, to be re-distributed in due time through every part of the community, sources of jealousy and prejudice would be diminished, the features of national character would be multiplied, and greater extent given to social harmony. But above all, a well-constituted seminary, in*

*‘ the centre of the nation, is recommended by the consideration that
 ‘ the additional instruction emanating from it would contribute not
 ‘ less to strengthen the foundation than to adorn the structure of our
 ‘ free and happy system of Government.’*

Again, in his message of December 5th, 1816, Mr. MADISON observes:

*“ The present is a favorable season for bringing again into view the
 ‘ establishment of a National Seminary of learning within the District
 ‘ of Columbia, and with means drawn from the property therein, sub-
 ‘ ject to the authority of the General Government. Such an institu-
 ‘ tion claims the patronage of Congress, as a monument of their
 ‘ solicitude for the advancement of knowledge, without which the
 ‘ blessings of liberty cannot be fully enjoyed or long preserved ; as a
 ‘ model instructive in the formation of the seminaries ; as a nursery of
 ‘ enlightened preceptors ; as a central resort of youth and genius from
 ‘ every part of their country, diffusing on their return examples of
 ‘ those national feelings, those liberal sentiments, and those congenial
 ‘ manners which contribute cement to our Union, and strength to the
 ‘ political fabric of which that is the foundation.”*

I have been free with italics, because I consider those parts so marked peculiarly appropriate and important. And I must remark that I cannot conceive how any public man can be so presumptuous as to assert and support doctrines opposed to the opinions of such patriots as WASHINGTON, JEFFERSON, and MADISON. I conceive that the extracts I have made from the Presidential messages in question are conclusive in the case, and I will not do the present Congress the injustice to suppose for a moment that, when the subject is properly brought to their notice, as it has been, to some extent, by our actual President, a prompt and satisfactory action will not be the consequence.

I shall continue in my next the discussion of the point I am now endeavoring to press upon the attention of the public, and will endeavor to prove that there should be no more delay on the part of Congress in complying with the trust of Mr. SMITHSON, and that the National Institute deserves its special and favorable attention in this matter as in others. I remain yours, respectfully,

J. C. B.

THE SMITHSONIAN BEQUEST.

LETTER No. IV.

WASHINGTON, *December 30, 1843.*

MESSRS. EDITORS: Having shown in my last number by extracts from the speeches and messages of Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, that those illustrious men gave to education the importance allowed it by all intelligent citizens, and entertained no serious constitutional scruples of the power of Congress to establish a National University in this District, I trust such testimony will prevent any one at this late day from being so bold as to enter the list with them, and convince the public that the subject is worthy their most serious attention. Strong, then, in the enthusiasm of such patriots as our three best Presidents, and incited by the hope of being able to aid, in some small degree, the cause of knowledge and education, I proceed in a few words on the subject of the Smithsonian Bequest, "for the diffusion of knowledge among men," trusting that the nation and Congress will alike be impressed with the urgency of the case, and the necessity of redeeming the national honor from a reproach which has been allowed to last too long.

I shall commence the subject by a brief statement of some of the facts attending the management and progress of this claim, finally decided in the Court of Chancery in favor of the United States, by which this Government became the trustee to carry out the purposes of Mr. Smithson's bequest. This decision was communicated to the Hon. John Forsyth, then Secretary of State, under date of May 12, 1838, by the Hon. Richard Rush, the special agent of the United States in London for the Smithsonian legacy, with the following remarks: "On the whole, I ask leave to congratulate the President and yourself on the result. A suit of higher interest and dignity has rarely, perhaps, been before the tribunals of a nation. If the trust created by the testator's will be successfully carried into effect by the enlightened legislation of Congress, benefits may flow to the United States and to the human family not easy to be estimated, because operating silently and gradually throughout time, yet operating not the less effectually. Not to speak of the inappreciable value of letters to individual and social man, the monuments which they raise to a nation's glory often last when others perish, and seem especially appropriate to the glory of a Republic whose foundations are laid in the presumed intelligence of

‘ its citizens, and can only be strengthened and perpetuated as that
‘ improves.”

The amount paid by Mr. Rush into the Treasury in September, 1838, was £104,960 8s. 6d., equal to \$508,318 46; and the Secretary of the Treasury, under date of December 3, 1838, reported to the President, that “in compliance with the provisions of the 6th section of the
‘ act of Congress for the support of the Military Academy of the United
‘ States, and for other purposes, approved 6th July, 1838, the sum of
‘ \$499,500 has been expended in the purchase of five hundred bonds of
‘ the State of Arkansas for \$1,000 each, bearing 6 per cent. interest,
‘ payable semi-annually, on the first day of January and July in each
‘ year, from the fourth day of September last, (the period of their pur-
‘ chase.) The further sum of \$8,270 67 has been applied to the pur-
‘ chase of eight bonds of the State of Michigan, bearing 6 per cent. in-
‘ terest, payable semi-annually hereafter, on the first Mondays in Janu-
‘ ary and July, from the first May last,” leaving in the Treasury the
sum of \$547 79, which was not then, but would be, as soon as a favorable opportunity offered, invested.

It is a matter of no importance, so far as the public here and abroad are concerned, whether the two States in question pay the interest on the above sum or not. The Government of the United States having accepted the trust created by the will of James Smithson, bearing date the 23d of October, 1826, by a solemn act of 1st July, 1836, stand responsible in the face of the whole world for the prompt and full performance of said trust, and to that Government alone are we to look for the forthcoming of the money when the plan shall have been agreed upon by Congress for carrying the bequest into execution.

That the fit time has arrived for carrying that bequest into execution, and for redeeming the national honor from the reproach of indifference to a solemn obligation voluntarily incurred, our present President asserts, when, in the paragraph of his last message wherein he so warmly recommends the interests of this District to the paternal care of Congress, he says: “In connexion with its other interests, as well as those of the
‘ whole country, I recommend that at your present session you adopt
‘ such measures, in order to carry into effect the Smithsonian bequest,
‘ as in your judgment will be best calculated to consummate the liberal
‘ intent of the testator.”

The subject, therefore, being thus officially before the Congress of the United States, and as it is to be hoped that the recommendation of

the President will meet with prompt and serious attention at the hands of the members, I deem it highly important to urge the public to give particular notice to the progress of this interesting business as one of the utmost importance to the Republic.

Being, then, of opinion that during the present session Congress may be persuaded to take the matter in hand, and do justice to themselves and the nation, I shall allude to some few of the plans proposed by several of the most eminent men in this country for the execution of the will of Mr. Smithson.

The Hon. John Quincy Adams having been applied to, in consequence of the desire of the then President to consult the views of persons versed in science and in matters relating to public education, as to the modes of applying the Smithsonian bequest, by the Hon. John Forsyth, Secretary of State, by letter dated July 19, 1838, answered October 6th, of same year, as follows :

"This, (the investment in State stocks, which he disapproved of,) however, was a temporary investment of the fund, which I was willing to hope would, under no consideration, be made permanent. In the report of the committee to the House of Representatives, accompanying the bill which authorized the President to take the necessary measures for recovering the fund, I had set forth in very explicit language my sense of the duties which devolved upon the Government of the United States by their acceptance, in behalf of the nation, of this bequest; and with the same views I introduced into *the bill a pledge of the faith of the United States that the fund should be applied to the generous purpose of the testator.*"

Mr. Adams then goes on to suggest that annual courses on the principal sciences, physical and mathematical, moral, political, and literary, to be delivered not by permanent professors, but by persons annually appointed, with a liberal compensation for each course, were among the means well adapted to the end of increasing and diffusing knowledge *among men*.

"But the great object of my solicitude," he continues, "would be to guard against the canker of almost all charitable foundations—jobbing for parasites and sops for hungry incapacity. For the economical management of the fund, and the periodical application of it to appropriate expenditures, it should be invested in a board of trustees, to consist partly of both Houses of Congress, with the Secretaries of the Departments, the Attorney General, the Mayor of the city of Wash-

‘ington, and one or more inhabitants of the District of Columbia, to be
 ‘incorporated as trustees of the Smithsonian fund, with a secretary and
 ‘treasurer in one person, and to be the only salaried person of the
 ‘board; to be appointed for four years, and be capable of reappoint-
 ‘ment, but removable for adequate cause by a majority of the Board.”

The letter concludes with the recommendation of a National Observatory as a part of the plan proposed, with which, I am sorry to say, I do not agree, (meaning to express my difference from the venerable writer in all deference,) and for the reason that, as the National Dépôt of Charts and Instruments, or National Observatory, and the observatory at Georgetown College, both of which will be soon ready for use, will answer the wants of the community in astronomy and the sciences therewith connected, I do not see why the fund should be taken from other important objects by any appropriation of the kind. I trust, however, that Mr. Adams has changed his views on this point since the establishment of the two above mentioned institutions in this District.

Professor Wayland, who was also applied to on the subject at the same time, in his letter of October 2, 1838, proposed a “National University,” occupying the space between the close of a collegiate education and a professional school; that there should be public lectures on Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and the Oriental languages; that all the modern languages of any use to the scholar should be taught; astronomy, engineering, civil and military; the art of war, beginning where it is left off at West Point; chemistry, geology, mining, music, and poetry; political economy, intellectual philosophy, physiology, vegetable and animal; anatomy, human, comparative; history, the laws of nations and the general principles of law, the Constitution of the United States.

The young men to provide for themselves board and lodging, and the professors to be responsible only for their education. The funds to be devoted as follows:

1st. A part to the creation of a library, cabinets, and furnishing apparatus necessary to the instructors.

2d. A part to the erection of buildings for the above purposes, together with buildings for professors’ houses.

3d. A fund should be established for the endowment of professorships, giving to each so much as may form a portion, say one-third or one-half of his living, and the rest to be provided for by the sale of the tickets to his course.

For the other details of this valuable letter, I refer the reader to the document itself.

I shall close the present article, as I promised in the beginning not to occupy too much space in your columns, by quoting some of the most prominent suggestions of the Hon. Richard Rush to the appeal of the Secretary. And before doing this, I deem it due to justice to say that I most sincerely believe the thanks of this nation and of the whole civilized world are his right, for the very able, faithful, and efficient manner in which he executed the delicate and important duties of special agent for the Smithsonian bequest, and the interesting communications he has since made on the same subject through the channel of the National Institute.

The suggestions of the letter, dated November 6, 1838, are as follows: That officers of the army and navy, consuls and ministers of the United States, might be employed in aiding in the objects of the Smithsonian university; the erection of a building at Washington, with accommodations for the business of the institution, and ground to be attached sufficient to produce seeds and plants.

The officers to consist of Director, Secretary, Librarian, and Treasurer, and persons under them to take care of grounds, &c., all to be appointed by the President and Senate. The Director to make an annual report, or more frequently, if necessary. Affairs to be subject to the visitation of the President, aided by a standing Board, to consist of the chief officers of the Government. The institution to have a press, or authority to employ one; nothing to be printed but under the sanction of the Director and standing Board of Visitors. And for the good government of the institution, the standing Board may call in the assistance of three or more scientific or literary persons unconnected with it; the profit of all publications to go in aid of the funds, &c. Lectureships to be established, with apparatus for the different branches.

I would refer the reader for particulars to the source itself, from which I have made these extracts, being document No. 11, 25th Congress, House of Representatives, where he will also find interesting letters on the same subject from Professors Cooper and Chapin.

I may be allowed to express, in conclusion, my satisfaction in finding that an able co-laborer is out in your columns in behalf of the Smithsonian bequest, over the signature of "W.," and trust that other pens may be employed in the same creditable manner.

I shall continue the discussion of the present question in my next, and, in the mean time, am respectfully, yours,

J. C. B.

THE SMITHSONIAN BEQUEST.

LETTER No. V.

WASHINGTON, *January 6, 1844.*

MESSRS. EDITORS: Having referred in my last number to several plans, proposed in consequence of the request of the President, conveyed through the then Secretary of State, the late Mr. Forsyth, in relation to the mode in which the Smithson Fund should be employed "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men," before I proceed to the quotation of different portions of the Report of the Hon. John Quincy Adams, from the Select Committee to whom the subject was referred in 1842, it will not be amiss to give a brief account of the generous testator to whose liberality we owe such a legacy, and whose memory, therefore, should be endeared to every citizen of this Republic.

The Hon. Richard Rush, in his letter of May 12th, 1838, from which I have made extracts in my last, informs the Secretary of State that James Smithson was the natural son of the Duke of Northumberland; that his mother was a Mrs. Macie, of an ancient family of Wiltshire, of the name of Hungerford; that he was educated at Oxford, where he took an honorary degree in 1786; that he took the name of James Lewis Macie, until a few years after he had left the University, when he changed it for Smithson; and that he does not appear to have had any fixed home, living in lodgings when in London, and occasionally a year or two at a time in the cities on the Continent, as Paris, Berlin, Florence, and Genoa, at which last place he died; and that the ample provision made for him by the Duke of Northumberland, with retired and simple habits, enabled him to accumulate the fortune which passed to the United States.

Mr. Adams, from the Select Committee above mentioned, speaks as follows: "The testator, James Smithson, a subject of Great Britain, declares himself, in the caption to the will, a descendant in blood from the Percies and Seymours, two of the most illustrious historical names of the British Islands. Nearly two centuries since, in 1660, the ancestor of his own name, Hugh Smithson, immediately after the restoration of the royal family of the Stuarts, received from Charles the Second, as a reward for his eminent services to that house during the civil wars, the dignity of Baronet of England—a dignity still held by the Dukes of Northumberland as descendants from the same Hugh Smithson. The father of the testator, by his marriage with the Lady

‘ Elizabeth Seymour, who was descended by a female line from the
 ‘ ancient Percies, and by the subsequent creation of George the Third
 ‘ in 1766, became the first Duke of Northumberland. His son and
 ‘ successor, the brother of the testator, known in the history of our Rev-
 ‘ olutionary war by the name of Lord Percy, was present, as a British
 ‘ officer, at the sanguinary opening scene of our Revolutionary war at
 ‘ Lexington, and at the battle of Bunker Hill; and was the bearer to
 ‘ the British Government of the despatches from the commander-in-chief
 ‘ of the Royal forces announcing the event of that memorable day: and
 ‘ the present Duke of Northumberland, the testator’s nephew, was the
 ‘ ambassador extraordinary of Great Britain sent to assist at the corona-
 ‘ tion of the late King of France, Charles the Tenth, a few months only
 ‘ before the date of this bequest from his relative to the United States
 ‘ of America.”

Is it not rather a strange coincidence, that, from a near relative of the man who first drew sword against the liberties of this country, should proceed the means of perpetuating and consolidating those liberties by the diffusion of education, that main pillar and foundation of republican institutions? Let us, on our side, then, obey this striking interference and dispensation of an all-wise Providence, and lose no more precious time in carrying such noble intentions into salutary operation.

The venerable and eloquent reporter continues in the following beautiful strain: “The father of the testator, upon forming his alliance
 ‘ with the heiress of the family of the Percies, assumed by an act of
 ‘ the British Parliament that name, and under it became Duke of Nor-
 ‘ thumberland. But, renowned as is the name of Percy in the histori-
 ‘ cal annals of England; resounding as it does from the summit of the
 ‘ Cheviot Hills to the ears of our children, in the ballad of Chevy chase,
 ‘ with the classical commentary of Addison; freshened and renovated
 ‘ in our memory as it has recently been, from the purest fountain of
 ‘ poetical inspiration, in the loftier strain of Alnwick castle, tuned by a
 ‘ bard of our own native land, (Fitz Greene Halleck;) doubly immor-
 ‘ talized as it is in the deathless dramas of Shakespeare; ‘ confident
 ‘ against the world in arms,’ as it may have been in ages long past, and
 ‘ may still be in the virtues of its present possessors by inheritance, *let*
 ‘ *the trust of James Smithson to the United States of America be*
 ‘ *faithfully executed by their Representatives in Congress—let the*
 ‘ result accomplish his object, ‘ the increase and diffusion of knowledge
 ‘ among men,’ and a wreath of more unfading virtue shall entwine

‘ itself in the lapse of future ages around the name of Smithson than
 ‘ the united hands of tradition, history, and poetry have braided around
 ‘ the name of Percy, through the long perspective in ages past of a
 ‘ thousand years.”

To this well-deserved and glowing eulogy of a man who has proved himself a true philanthropist and lover of mankind, there should be but one response, and that of approbation. To his high opinion of republican institutions, and his remembrance of the great ends he adopted in his will, we should afford an efficient and prompt attention, this being the very best of all methods to show to the world that we are worthy of the sublime compliment paid to our country.

In the words of the report, “ of all the foundations of establishments
 ‘ for pious or charitable uses, which ever signalized the spirit of the
 ‘ age, or the comprehensive beneficence of the founder, none can be
 ‘ named more deserving of the approbation of mankind than this.
 ‘ Should it be faithfully carried into effect, with an earnestness and sa-
 ‘ gacity of application, and a steady perseverance of pursuit, propor-
 ‘ tioned to the means furnished by the will of the founder, and to the
 ‘ greatness and simplicity of his design, as by himself declared, ‘ the
 ‘ increase and diffusion of knowledge among men,’ it is no extrava-
 ‘ gance of anticipation to declare that his name will be hereafter enrolled
 ‘ among the eminent benefactors of mankind.”

The report goes on then to enforce the sacred nature of the charge entrusted to the Government of the United States, and to insist upon the necessity of a faithful compliance with the conditions of the will, and a judicious employment of the fund so received in trust. “ In the
 ‘ commission of every trust,” says the chairman, “ there is an implied
 ‘ tribute of the soul to the integrity and intelligence of the trustee ; and
 ‘ there is also an implied call for the faithful exercise of those proper-
 ‘ ties to the fulfilment of the purpose of the trust. The tribute and the
 ‘ call acquire additional force and energy when the trust is committed
 ‘ for performance after the decease of him by whom it is granted—when
 ‘ he no longer exists to witness or to constrain the effective fulfilment
 ‘ of his design. The magnitude of the trust, and the extent of con-
 ‘ fidence bestowed on the committal of it, do but enlarge and aggravate
 ‘ the pressure of the obligation which it carries with it. The weight of
 ‘ the duty imposed, is proportioned to the honor conferred by confidence
 ‘ without reserve. Your committee are fully persuaded, therefore, that,
 ‘ with a grateful sense of the honor conferred by the testator upon the

‘ political institutions of this Union, the Congress of the United States, in accepting the bequest, will feel, in all its power and plenitude, the obligation of responding to the confidence reposed by him with all the fidelity, disinterestedness, and perseverance of exertion which may carry into effective execution the noble purpose of an endowment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.”

Before leaving this able and interesting report, (see Rep. No. 587, 27th Congress, 2d Session,) I may state, that from it it appears that subsequent to the investment in the stocks of Arkansas and Michigan, mentioned in my last, \$3,800 of the stocks of the State of Arkansas, \$3,600 of the State of Illinois, \$1,800 of the State of Ohio, have been invested, as also the sum of \$1,291 86, at the rate of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. by the Secretary of the Treasury.

Eight years have elapsed since the fact of the Smithsonian Bequest was communicated to Congress by the President of the United States. The said bequest was solemnly accepted by Congress on the 1st of July, 1836, and the faith of the United States was by that act expressly pledged for the faithful performance of the trust assumed by the acceptance of the bequest. An agent was appointed by virtue of this act, who, by decree of chancery, recovered a sum, which, on the 1st of September, 1838, was deposited in gold at the United States Mint at Philadelphia, amounting to \$508,318 46. The duty of Congress to comply with the terms of the trust thus created has been urged by Presidential Messages at various times. Committees have been appointed on the part of both Houses of Congress, the result of which has been merely the report of the select committee referred to, which has never been acted upon by the House, and a resolution of the 20th February, 1839, from the Senator who had been the chairman of the joint committee in question, which on the 1st of March following was laid on the table by the Senate. Our present President has finally brought the subject again before Congress in his late message, and a committee, I believe, has been appointed in the Senate to take the matter into consideration.

Thus this long space of time has been allowed to elapse without any efficient action on the part of the trustee under this humane and noble bequest. Whenever the subject has been brought up for discussion it has been met with indifference, or the constitutional scruples of hair-splitting politicians. And how long, if another and a more worthy spirit do not stir up and animate our Congress, public men, and the

community than has hitherto been the case, this disreputable disregard to our solemn pledge and sense of duty shall endure and be tolerated, is beyond my means of imagining.

I write advisedly and calmly when I assert that this neglect of trust on the part of our Government is a national disgrace, and should not be allowed to soil our name one hour longer than is absolutely necessary. I say to the members of both Houses, why waste precious days in the discussion of local and abstract questions, whereof the large proportion can produce no good fruit, when a subject of deep interest, not to these States merely, nor to this continent, but to the whole civilized world, is at your doors asking for admission, and clamorous for action? Why spend your time in the rabid contest of factions, the debating of questions which must be confined in their operations, and little calculated to add to the durable fame of those who discuss them, when you here have a subject which, if settled without further delay, and that in a spirit of liberality, judgment, and an intelligent intendment of the wishes of the testator, will distinguish the present Congress among its fellows, as the honest performer of a solemn trust and the friend and patron of education, that best and most enduring bulwark and support of republican institutions? I envy no man who raises himself to temporary, and but too often undeserved, popularity, by identifying himself with some local and insignificant subject, of little or no interest to the public at large; but I do envy that servant of the people who, adopting and carrying into practice the opinions of such great and true patriots as Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and John Quincy Adams, in relation to education and science, soars far above paltry questions, and establishes his claim to the gratitude of posterity by enlarged views and generous acts. That the present Congress have it in their power to do a just and honorable act, in carrying out as soon as practicable the Smithsonian bequest, is a high and an enviable privilege, which they ought not, if they be wise and patriotic, to lose by neglect. That they will take speedy steps to redeem the national honor from the reproach which for so many long years has clung to it, I do not allow myself to doubt; and I believe that the following motion of the Hon. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, in the House of Representatives last Wednesday, is a premonitory symptom of such a laudable intention on the part of that body to redeem the plighted faith of the nation:

“Resolved, That the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to report to this House the present state and condition of the funds bequeathed by James Smithson to the United States, for the establishment, at the city of Washington, of an institution for the increase

and diffusion of knowledge among men; with a statement of what payments of interest have been received, and what, if any, have been refused or withheld on the State stocks in which the said funds were invested; the amounts of interest so withheld or refused to be paid, and what measures have been taken by the Secretary to recover the same. Also, by whose agency the said investments were made; with copies of any correspondence of the Treasury Department with such agents relating thereto."

This looks very much like action; and no person is better fitted to conduct the matter than the distinguished Ex-President, the fast friend to the objects of the Smithsonian Fund.

I shall, in my next, gentlemen, devote some space to the recent suggestions in relation to the employment of the Smithsonian Fund, of Messrs. Rush, and Duponceau, and Preston, and their proposals to place it under the management of the National Institute, and to the development of some of my own private views on the same subject.

Yours, respectfully,

J. C. B.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE.

LETTER No. VI.

WASHINGTON, *January 13, 1844.*

MESSRS. EDITORS: Having in my last made divers brief quotations from the report of the select committee to which the subject of the Smithsonian Bequest was referred, proposing a plan for carrying it into execution, and urging a prompt attention to the same on the part of Congress and the nation, I now proceed to show that Messrs. Rush, Duponceau, Preston, and Maxcy were of opinion that the said bequest might be judiciously entrusted to the management of the National Institute in this city.

The first named gentleman, whose acquaintance with the subject and deep interest in the matter every one must admire and concede, in his letter of March 4, 1842, to Francis Markoe, Esq., Corresponding Secretary of the National Institute, among other reflections and arguments, observes:

"Let, then, this precious fund (the Smithsonian) no longer be idle. Let it be made to yield, without more delay, those moral blessings for which it was sent to this hemisphere. Let Congress take your Institution as a foundation. In the contrariety of opinion as to any other plan, the much longer postponement, if not entire frustration of the benign intentions of the donor, is too much to be feared.

“ Being yourselves but trustees for diffusing knowledge among your fellow men, and seeking nothing selfish, there could be no objection to your asking Congress to invest you, under its own guards and sanctions, with the fund. By my estimate of duty, you owe it to science and your country to take that step on the broadest grounds of utility to both. In your ministration, with the aid of so rich an investment, to the mental wants of the community, much might be hoped from salutary influences in calming the too intense and exclusive excitements at Washington, where only a slender population is concentrated. By bringing to that seat of official power other excitements in diversified objects of intellectual curiosity and attention, a change might be witnessed that would act usefully upon the spirit of legislation itself, producing good effects to the whole Union. These are not irrational hopes. Knowledge is strengthened by its alliance with power. Power is raised and purified in its aims and chastened in its exercise by the influence of knowledge. Every day’s delay in improving the Smithsonian Fund to its intended and stipulated uses, is an injury to the present and future race of men. It is a wrong, silent in its operation, but not the less a wrong. Let me even say that one of the incidental uses of the fund, when in activity at the seat of Government, will be to shed a benign aid towards the permanency of the Union itself, by that community of mind and feeling which science and literature, well endowed and cultivated at the metropolis, will in time help to engender and diffuse.”

In his letter to the National Institute of November, 1840, Mr. Duponceau recommends that association as a fit agent for carrying into effect the objects of the Smithsonian Bequest in these terms: “ I have always been of opinion that it was such an institution as yours at the seat of Government that Mr. Smithson had in view when he made his munificent legacy to the United States. He could not mean, in my opinion, that his money should be applied to the promotion of any specific branch of knowledge, much less to the formation of a school or academy. His views were more extensive. He wished to promote science in all its branches and departments, and therefore he wished his institution to be fixed at the seat of Government; from whence, as from a centre, the rays of science might be diffused throughout the whole country. And, therefore, Congress cannot find a better opportunity to execute the will of that beneficent testator than by laying hold of your institution and making it its own.”

Mr. Duponceau again writes to Mr. Markoe on the same subject under date of April, 1842, urging the same point as in the foregoing in the following manner: "I find from Mr. Rush's letter, which you have communicated to me, that I was not the only one to whom that suggestion occurred." (The idea of applying the Smithsonian Bequest to the National Institute.) "Since that time, it appears to have struck the mind of many of the most respectable friends of science, and it appears to have agreed with the opinion expressed by your distinguished President, Mr. Poinsett, in his inaugural address. I see with pleasure that Mr. Rush entertains the same opinion. No one has had a better opportunity to know the real intentions of the testator; and his opinion on that and many other accounts is entitled to the greatest respect."

I need scarcely observe that the opinions of men so distinguished as Messrs. Poinsett, Rush, and Duponceau, not only in the political, but in the scientific meaning of the word, should be respectfully received and well considered. When persons so rich in experience and sound in judgment develope their views on matters with which they are familiar, they should have due weight with every reflecting and intelligent mind.

The Hon. W. C. Preston, so justly celebrated as a statesman, a scholar, and an orator, in his letter of April, 1843, to the Corresponding Secretary of the National Institute, expresses his opinion in the matter as follows: "Our Government is peculiarly incapable of a proper superintendence of scientific institutions. In the first place, it may be said, that it has no constitutional power; and, if it had, the tenure of office is so liable to change that in a department so removed from interests of intense excitement, negligence and decay would soon creep in." Thus indicating, by implication, an institution like that of which he is so useful and prized a member as the proper agent for the superintendence of the Smithsonian Fund.

Our public spirited and able ex-Chargé d'Affaires at Brussels, Virgil Maxcy, Esq., uses this strong and well-expressed language in his letter to Mr. Markoe, dated in that city December 29, 1840. I consider that letter so interesting and well-written that I flatter myself my readers will pardon me for quoting it entire: "It affords me the highest gratification as an American citizen, and as the representative of our Republic to a foreign country, to learn that the National Institution, recently founded at Washington, has been so favorably received by

‘ our men of science ; and I cannot but indulge a hope that the public
 ‘ generally will lend it a generous confidence and cordial co-operation
 ‘ and thus supply what has long been to us, who occupy so high a rank
 ‘ in the scale of civilization, no little reproach ; the want of some so-
 ‘ ciety or institution which may compare with those of other nations,
 ‘ and sustain the reputation of our Republic in the great cause of scien-
 ‘ tific investigation, in which no country can feel a deeper and more
 ‘ abiding interest than our own, as every day discloses some new fact
 ‘ illustrative of the extraordinary skill, energy, and ingenuity of our
 ‘ citizens—qualities in which they are equalled by few and surpassed
 ‘ by no other people. If such be the case in our not very advanced
 ‘ state of science, what important results might not be anticipated with
 ‘ more extensive practical experiment and greater knowledge of abstract
 ‘ science, and the collection and diffusion of minute economical in-
 ‘ formation in connexion with the useful arts ?”

But the following and concluding part of the letter refers directly to the point under discussion, and deserves much respect and weight as the expression of opinion on the part of an intelligent and liberal public man. He continues : “ While indulging in the patriotic sentiments, which I believe are common to us all, it has occurred to me that perhaps no better disposition could be made of the munificent bequest to the United States by an enlightened foreigner for the establishment of an institution at Washington for the ‘ diffusion of knowledge among men’ than to place it under the direction of a society which has been organized for the express purpose of carrying into effect similar, and indeed I may add, identical views with those contemplated by the philanthropical and philosophical testator. One among many reasons that might be urged for this arrangement would be the securing in its favor the general, and, perhaps, universal influence of scientific men, whose patriotic labors would thus be brought into active co-operation with the Smithsonian Institution, whose funds would enable the Society to collect and diffuse throughout the United States a vast amount of diversified and valuable information.”

Although the opinions and arguments, of which I have given select fragments in the foregoing lines, would seem to render any further observation on my part almost an act of supererogation, yet such is the deep interest I feel in the subject, and so strong my conviction that the speedy and faithful performance of the trust created under the Smithsonian bequest, and the confiding of the same to the partial control of

the National Institute, are matters of great moment for the public at large, that I cannot resist the inclination which urges me to the task, and cheers me with the hope that I may do some little good. I had hoped to have been able to enter upon the discussion in this number; but having been induced by their cogency and merit to quote more of the opinions and reasoning of the distinguished men with whom I am proud to agree than I had first intended, I find that the limits which I have prescribed for the length of these hasty essays will prevent me from doing so at present. In my next I will, therefore, continue the discussion, with a statement of my own views on the subject.

I may be allowed to state, in conclusion, as connected with the question, that a friend in this city has informed me that Mr. Rush has been so good as to approve of the object and spirit of these letters, and to express his warm hope that Congress will act efficiently in the matter of the Smithsonian Bequest this session, and connect it, as proposed by him already, with the National Institute. May his views and aspirations be soon gratified and secured!

Yours, respectfully,

J. C. B.

THE SMITHSONIAN BEQUEST.

LETTER No. VII.

WASHINGTON, *January 20, 1844.*

GENTLEMEN: I flatter myself that the distinguished witnesses I have called before the tribunal of public opinion in my preceding numbers will be deemed more than sufficient to prove that it was the pride and policy of several of our most venerated Presidents to inculcate and foster education and the diffusion of knowledge; that many of our most prominent and patriotic statesmen and scholars attach great importance to the subject of the Smithsonian Bequest, and several of them desire its union with the National Institute, under certain conditions; and that they all agree in the opinion that the neglect on the part of this Government to comply with the terms of the trust in question is a great public wrong, and disreputable to the country at large. The following extract, from a recent public journal, may be adduced as additional proof, if proof be needed, to show how much injury a similar neglect, or rather malfeasance in a city corporation, is working in the community. It is termed "A consequence of violating Girard's will. Francis S.

‘ Rowan died at Pittsburg on Monday last. He left by will a large sum —some say \$80,000—for endowing a hospital in Paris, a bequest which would have been used for some charitable purpose in this country, had not Philadelphia used Girard’s trust contrary to his direction.” Will this Government continue to encourage other alienations of private beneficence from objects of charity in this hemisphere, by neglecting any longer to comply with their solemnly pledged faith? I hope, for the honor of the country, that it will not. It is because I entertain this hope, that I have ventured upon the discussion of the subject, and shall proceed, in brief terms, to give my own private views in the matter.

The intention of the testator being “the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men,” by the foundation of an institution at Washington, it seems to me that the widest latitude of interpretation should be applied to the construction of the will. It should be the study of those who are called upon to establish that construction and to carry the objects of the bequest into execution, to indulge in the most enlarged and enlightened views, consistent with the practical benefit we all desire that it should secure. And as no country, in proportion to its means and opportunities, devotes more time and attention to primary instruction, so as to render the people fit, in some degree, for the high privileges which, as American citizens, they enjoy, and as colleges and academies are established and well encouraged in every section of the land, the only desideratum we stand in need of at present is some public institution similar to the one intended by the Smithsonian Bequest, where those higher branches, which neither the time, opportunities, minds, nor dispositions of the mass will allow them to attend to, may be placed, on the most liberal and economical terms, within the reach of those whose tastes, intellects, or ambition would induce them to devote themselves to the task. The best way to effect this desirable result is to found public lectures, as already proposed by Messrs. Adams, Wayland, Rush, &c., and to begin the instruction where it is finished in our universities. These lectures should, of course, embrace all the higher branches of human knowledge, be delivered by the best informed men the country produces, be illustrated by proper apparatus, experiments, and drawings, and open, like those of Paris and elsewhere on the continent, to the public without charge and discrimination. The branches proper to be taught in such an institution are so well and fully enumerated by the learned gentlemen from whom I have quoted in my preceding letters, that I shall not intrude upon the time of my readers with a repetition.

I shall confine myself to some few points which I deem to be the most important and proper for me to dwell upon.

It being, then, my opinion, agreeing to a considerable extent with the opinions of Messrs. Adams, Rush, Wayland, Duponceau, Preston, &c., that the more general and the more public the oral or other instruction proposed to be so delivered, commencing with the close of an academic education, can be made, the better and more salutary will be the results, I think the location and mode of construction for the Smithsonian Institution matters well worth a serious discussion. It happens, fortunately, that an extensive and well adapted space of open ground, called the Mall, stretching from the base of the Capitol to the banks of the Potomac, seems to invite Congress to place the institution there, and to improve and ornament it in a tasty and judicious manner. There could be no fitter position, one more convenient to the citizens and strangers, grounds more easily put into a state of improvement, and better calculated to ornament this metropolis, and make it worthy of being the headquarters of learning, as well as Government, for these free and growing States. The buildings for the accommodation of the lecturers and their hearers, whilst neat and ornamental, should be erected with a due regard to economy, because the fund is comparatively a small one, and it is much more important to secure men of talent as professors, and to devote more money to the diffusion of knowledge by their means, than to raise imposing edifices or stately monuments of architecture. If refined taste is to be exerted, which I most sincerely hope may be the case, let it be exhibited in the adaptation of the structures to the uses for which they may be intended, and in the preparation and arrangement of the grounds. Let the fund be used sparingly and judiciously, but by no means in a spirit of false economy, which is so much the fashion of the day. And, my word for it, if proper professors be selected, fit instruments and apparatus be procured, appropriate rooms be erected, and political favoritism be banished, as an unclean thing, from the sacred precincts of our great University—if an intelligent man be appointed to lay out the Mall, with an eye to the union of the English Park and Continental garden styles in the arrangement of the grounds, and competent and attentive gardeners be placed over them when finished, whose duty it shall be to keep them in good order, my word for it, I say, that this country will have cause to bless the day when the philanthropic Smithson entrusted the execution of his wishes to a Government which must not, cannot prove recreant to the trust. Every one who has stood

upon the terrace of the Capitol, and gazed upon the wide and imposing landscape before his eyes, must have grieved that such a fine tract of land as that embraced within the public reservation called the Mall, should remain so long unattended to, an eyesore and a standing reproach to the good sense and taste of the nation. To do away with this reproach, and in order to persuade Congress that now is the time to aid in extending the usefulness and efficacy of the Smithsonian Fund, do I propose that at the same moment when an action is had by them upon that subject, an adequate sum shall also be appropriated for the improvement and ornament of that reservation, so that the buildings of the University, proposed by said bequest, may be surrounded by grounds worthy of the nation and of the great institution they are called upon to establish. It being public property, and for the benefit of the whole nation, there can certainly be no constitutional scruples on that score, nor any impolicy or impropriety in voting the necessary funds. The Mall is so well prepared already for the purpose, its level surface requiring but little graduation or excavation, and the cost attendant upon the planting of trees in avenues, as in the London parks, the construction of roads and paths for equestrians and pedestrians, and a good and sufficient enclosure, so insignificant, that I am sure the public would be greatly surprised upon discovering with what little pains, time, and expense the result could be effected. When, therefore, spacious and level avenues and walks are made, shaded by fine and spreading trees, the greensward well fashioned, and the desolate spot converted into a smiling and verdant garden, what prouder monuments could we desire to be placed there than the well-constructed and well-regulated institution of the philanthropic testator, and the monumental tribute which several of our public-spirited citizens, who have united together under the name of "The Washington Monument Society," wish to erect to the memory of the "Pater Patriæ" in the metropolis of the country which owes him so much? I would therefore suggest, that the gentlemen who have the honor of initiating the patriotic project of erecting a monument to that great and good man, should apply again, not discouraged by the rude and unmerited reception they met with some few years back, to Congress for a spot on the Mall for that purpose. The money which they have collected, about \$40,000, will be sufficient for the erection of a handsome monument; and, as they must have abandoned before this all idea of making further collections, I think it the duty of the board to make all due efforts to carry the original intention into execution, according to their present means. I need hardly dilate upon the immediate advantages for this city and District if a plan similar to the one of

which I have given the outlines thus briefly be carried into effect. I trust that the people at large will be equally convinced, that the national honor and advantage will be thereby most signally consulted; for I consider this District as belonging to the whole nation, and as having peculiar claims on the generosity and kindness of Congress, and that every thing done for our benefit, in a public point of view, redounds to the credit, if not positive benefit, of the whole Republic.

By the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution, the laying out and improvement of the Mall, and the permission for the National Monument Society to erect a handsome structure to the memory of Washington within its precincts, in conjunction with the salutary operation of the National Institute, upon science, belles-lettres, and the fine arts, and of the two Observatories, now in the course of construction in this District, on astronomical research, it must strike the most obtuse mind, that benefits of a rare nature must flow upon the community, and make this too-much neglected city a fit residence for our Government, an ennobled place of sojourn for the National Legislature, and a source of honest pride to every true lover of his native land. It is not my province, nor do my limits allow me to enter upon minute details on the subject. My desire and intention is simply to attract public attention to a matter which I deem to be pregnant with much good for the country, and in serving my native city, to reflect the credit and advantage throughout the breadth and length of the land. I leave to others better fitted for the task to demand a due share of notice for the exact sciences in the establishment of the Smithsonian Bequest. For, although no one is more alive than myself to the necessity and benefit of devoting much time to severe studies, yet, inasmuch as science has abundant champions already, who must be heard sooner or later, I shall, to avoid repetition, dwell more particularly upon the wisdom and expediency of giving also a due share of notice to the Fine Arts, which I deem to be clearly embraced in the expression of Smithson's will, "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." If it be true, as it is most undoubtedly, that the nature of the Fine Arts is to refine the taste, improve the head and heart, and to render man more polished and humane, I suppose that no one will be so bold or silly as to assert, that this branch of human knowledge should be excluded from the benefit of the fund in question, or from any institution which pretends to instruct and benefit mankind. Without wasting words, however, upon a point which few or none will be found to contest, I would suggest, that

among the apartments constructed for the use of the Smithsonian University, a large, properly built, and handsome hall shall be appropriated, on a plan somewhat similar to those of the Apollo Association of New York, or of the "Exposition" which takes place annually in the galleries of the Louvre at Paris, to the collection and exhibition of the works of native and foreign artists in paintings, sculpture, and engravings. Situated as this city is, within comparatively easy journeys from every section of the country, and a place where the talent, riches, fashion, and merit of the land yearly congregate, and which few or no foreign travellers pass by without a visit, it seems to me that no more suitable rendezvous could be named for genius and ambition to select as the field of their operations. In the furtherance of this laudable undertaking, it is to be hoped that the sister establishment, the National Institute, will not be found wanting. It can aid very materially in the good work, without withdrawing any of its attention from science or education, and particularly if there be the proposed union between it and the Smithsonian Institution.

I shall continue the discussion of this subject in my next, and until then,

I am yours, respectfully,

J. C. B.

WASHINGTON, *January 20, 1844.*

THE SMITHSONIAN BEQUEST.

LETTER No. VIII.

GENTLEMEN: The concluding part of my last communication was devoted to the suggestion of some plan that might secure for the fine arts a portion of that attention and encouragement which every civilized nation ought to feel proud to have it in its power to bestow. I flatter myself that the plan so suggested will be found efficient and economical, and well suited to enable the artists of this and other countries to bring their works before the public, and thus disseminate the principles of taste among the people.

The following extract from a letter of the Hon. JOSEPH R. INGERSOLL, of Philadelphia, dated December 13, 1841, and addressed to the Corresponding Secretary of the National Institute, will give my readers some idea of the opinions of that distinguished gentleman on the subject. Recommending to the Institute the establishment of a Department of Taste and the Fine Arts, he says:

“At the same time that science is effectually promoted, it is confidently believed that principles may be cultivated and diffused which will refine, liberalize, and give grace to public sentiment, and make our country no longer dependent upon the schools of foreign nations for the instruction of her gifted sons in the elements of those elegant accomplishments in which, when their tastes are cultivated, they are so able to excel.”

The erection of a hall or gallery connected with the buildings of the Smithsonian Bequest, wherein may be deposited for exhibition the works of painters, sculptors, architects, and engravers, leaving a part for the use of a permanent exposition of such as this Government or individuals, from time to time, may be induced to purchase, will be the very best means, in my opinion, to produce the desirable results alluded to by the liberal writer from whom I have just quoted.

I would, therefore, respectfully propose that the gallery in question be composed of two grand divisions. The first to be divided into four departments: No. 1, for oil paintings; No. 2, water colors; No. 3, engravings; and No. 4, sculpture and architecture. Let this first grand division be devoted exclusively to living artists, native and foreign. A standing committee should be appointed by Congress, (its members to be selected from persons best fitted to the task,) who shall decide whether the pieces sent to the gallery for exhibition are to be received or rejected. The works so exhibited to have the names of the respective artists attached, with their prices, and the public to be allowed full privilege to purchase at will.

We shall thus establish an annual exhibition of the productions of native and foreign genius at the metropolis of this Republic, enlarging its influence, increasing its attractions, adding to its reputation as the headquarters of science, literature, and the fine arts, and giving a salutary impetus to the public taste throughout the country.

The second grand division should be appropriated to the exhibition of such works of the old masters, in painting or sculpture, as may come into the possession of Government or individuals, either as presents or purchases; and artists should be allowed to study and copy freely those models, as in the European galleries.

It happens most fortunately that a gentleman of taste and leisure has made a valuable collection of old paintings in Europe, and has brought them on to this city for exhibition. I understand that this collection is offered to the Government for a very moderate price by the proprietor.

Many of your readers have had an opportunity of judging for themselves of the merits of those paintings. Having visited several of the best European galleries myself, and studied some of their best pieces, I may be allowed to observe, that I consider several of the collection as works of rare merit, and, if not actual originals, at least most excellent copies. It is to be hoped that this Government will not lose this occasion of procuring, at a price far below their real value, a large number of paintings, such as are but seldom if ever seen in this part of the world. They will form an appropriate nucleus and beginning for the great Smithsonian gallery, and should not be allowed to be lost to the public by passing into private hands under the sacrificing and desecrating hammer of an auctioneer.

I do not know whether any of your readers will have been struck with the reflection that, although this city is regularly visited by artists and amateurs, there is no fit place for the exhibition of their paintings. The Rotundo is almost completely occupied by the large pieces which ornament its walls; and by the empty panels which await those of Inman and Vanderlyn, thus leaving but a very small space indeed for the exposition of any others, and forcing the owners to place them on the floor, or in such positions as to prevent amateurs from viewing them in their best lights, and thus appreciating their beauties. The hall of the Patent Office, whither I am told the collection lately exhibited in the Rotundo has been transported, is too much crowded with the cabinets of the Exploring Expedition and the National Institute, and receives the light in too imperfect and irregular a manner, to permit it to be considered for a moment a suitable *locale* for a public exhibition of the kind. No one will presume, I imagine, to assert that any one of the Departments is a fit place for such exhibition. So that the expediency and necessity of erecting some structure suited to the purpose must be evident to every mind.

But let us suppose, by way of argument, that Congress shall not see fit to devote a part of the Smithsonian buildings to a hall for the permanent and annual exposition of works of art, what prevents them from adopting some other mode of supplying the desideratum I deem so desirable and important?

I would suggest that an appropriation sufficient for the purpose be promptly made to erect a proper building within the Capitol grounds, where that masterpiece of American skill, Greenough's WASHINGTON, and the long-expected works of Persico, whereof report speaks in flatter-

ing terms, shall be deposited, and protected against the severe climate of these latitudes. The structure should be built upon a plan best adapted to the particular objects in view, and sufficiently capacious to afford room for a public exhibition similar to the one I have proposed for the Smithsonian Institution. If my suggestion be listened to, or thought practicable, by those whom it concerns, we shall then possess in our midst a great public temple of the fine arts, devoted to their encouragement, by the purchase of paintings and sculpture commemorative of our Revolutionary and subsequent history, and the reproduction upon canvass of the features of our own varied and picturesque land. Already a respectable sum of money has been voted, and part of the same paid over, to the several artists for the perpetuation of scenes connected with the early history of this Republic. What, then, prevents Congress from continuing this praiseworthy patronage of the arts, so that events still more interesting to this generation, if possible, shall find men to give them "a local habitation and a name?" What has once been done may be done again; and shame on the man who would be silly and niggard enough to raise a hue and cry about the employment of the people's money on works of taste and for the benefit of native talent, when not an hour goes by but thousands are wasted upon "things as light as air," and from which the gulled people get no kind of benefit whatever. We do not ask you to erect a costly and magnificent structure, but simply to furnish the necessary funds for the construction of a modest though tasty gallery, which may prove a decent refuge for the statue of the Father of his Country and the works of Persico, around which shall be grouped, from time to time, the busts and statues of our national celebrities, dead and living, while on its walls shall be suspended the productions of native and foreign artists. If Congress only take this subject seriously and understandingly in hand, my word for it, plans enough will be presented to allow them abundant choice, and room to consult a wise economy, without violating the rules of taste. But do, gentlemen, at all events, rescue our WASHINGTON from his present ugly and unseemly place of concealment, if you wish to claim any credit for good sense and good taste, and to deserve well of the Republic!

By this public and private patronage of taste and genius, the so oft-repeated and affecting story of the sufferings of their devotees will be at least rendered less applicable to this country. Within the genial atmosphere of that generous encouragement, worthy successors and rivals of

our Allstons, Coles, Vanderlyns, Doughtys, Greenoughs, and Powers will live and flourish, and the melancholy fate of many a Clevenger be avoided, by a proper appreciation of his merits when living, and not by those posthumous tributes which reach not the poor artist in his early grave. That gifted son of the West has gone down to the tomb, with all his capacities and unsated aspirations about him. And now, alas! too late, subscriptions are being made up for the benefit of the bereaved widow and her children, and to secure for his own country the creations of his magic chisel. I wish not to reflect upon the acts or motives of those charitable gentlemen, nor to detract one iota from the credit which is due them for their liberality; but I want this instance of too tardy justice and encouragement to prove a warning to the community, so that another case of similar neglect may not sit upon their consciences. An ounce of patronage when the artist is alive, or endeavoring to live, is worth a pound of such as poor Clevenger encountered, and it is too much the fashion of the day to apply when the broken-hearted and starved son of genius has gone "to that bourne from whence no traveller returns."

I know that we are yet a young people, intent on providing for our animal wants and propensities; that the time for general refinement is not yet arrived; and that individual fortunes are too small and uncertain in their tenure to allow much individual patronage of belles-lettres and the fine arts. I know that in the roar and explosion of political excitement, the mercenary struggles for place, and President making, it is difficult to be heard on any other subject, and harder still to produce much effect. I know and confess all these things, and still I say, if ye be wise men, men possessed of hearts and minds, men capable of sympathy and feeling, loving your own country and desiring that it be honored, spare a little of your superfluous time and means to the encouragement of intellectual pursuits. Do in a body what you cannot as individuals. Tell your Representatives that you do not consider money so employed as thrown away. Tell them that the best way to encourage patriotism and a right public spirit is to place before your eyes graphic scenes of great national events and statues of patriotic men; that no eloquence of language or description, no force of argument and example, speaks more directly to the head and heart than the creations of the artist who pours upon his canvass the light and glory of his genius, gives existence to the memory of departed worth, and perpetuates living merit by the magic touches of his chisel.

It is not enthusiasm alone that directs my pen, or causes me to indulge in dreams almost too glorious to be realized, but a sober and abiding conviction that the humble efforts I am now making to direct the stream of public and private patronage towards the parched regions of the arts will not be made in vain. Sooner or later fruit will be produced. Reforms and revolutions are not the creatures of a day, nor great undertakings to be carried out without great patience, strong enthusiasm, and an ardent conviction of the justice of one's cause. If it be my good luck to assist, however slightly, in bringing about the desired results, I shall be indeed most happy, and shall feel that I have not lived in vain.

I shall, gentlemen, after having devoted some hasty remarks as to the expediency of embracing practical agriculture and gardening within the scope of the Smithsonian Fund, return in my next to the subject of the National Institute, from which I have been forced to wander so long and unwillingly.

Yours, truly,

J. C. B.

THE SMITHSONIAN BEQUEST.

LETTER No. IX.

WASHINGTON, *February 4, 1844.*

MESSRS. EDITORS: My last letter was devoted to the subject of the Fine Arts, and to the suggestion of a plan for embracing their encouragement within the scope of the Smithsonian Fund, by the erection of a public gallery within the mall, forming a portion of the Smithsonian buildings, for the exhibition of paintings, statues, engravings, and architectural works. I also proposed a substitute, in case such plan should not be deemed practicable or suited to the purpose; that is, the building of a National Temple in the Capitol grounds, where the statue of Washington by Greenough might be placed, after having been rescued from its present ignoble hiding box, as also the statuary of Persico, which are now nearly ready for delivery, to be surrounded by the productions of native and foreign artists in every branch of that profession. I sincerely trust that this appeal may not be made in vain, and that Congress and the people may spare a little time in order to turn their attention to a subject which I deem highly important and interesting.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the propriety of embracing also within the operation of the Smithsonian Bequest the branch of practical

agriculture, I deem it well to notice an informal meeting of several members of the National Institute held on last Monday evening, the object of their proceedings being matter of public interest, at which I had the pleasure of being present. The readers of your columns will probably remember that on the 23d of last month there was a large meeting at the office of the Secretary of State, for the purpose of laying before Congress and the public a statement of the present condition of the National Institute, its operations, wants, and claims, and of making a strong appeal in its behalf for public patronage, aid, and support. The subject, also, of the proposed general meeting, under the auspices of the Institute, of scientific and literary men in this city next April was also discussed, and the committee, already created for the purpose of making the necessary arrangements for that interesting occasion, instructed to take prompt and efficient steps to that effect. The meeting of Monday last was therefore simply a reunion of that committee, with the addition of several other gentlemen, members of the Institute. The Hon. John Quincy Adams took the chair; and, after some brief but interesting remarks from that venerable gentleman, who is ever active when the march of mind is in question, we were favored with several reflections and suggestions by the Hon. Messrs. Choate, Spencer, and J. R. Ingersoll, and Colonels Abert and Totten, on the subject of those arrangements. I have, therefore, the pleasure to inform the public that there is every probability a large and respectable gathering of learned and ingenious men will take place in this city in the month already mentioned, and that the discourses, lectures, and proceedings on that occasion will prove of general interest throughout the country. I need scarcely dwell upon the good effects which must ensue from this communion of minds, and reunion of public spirited citizens for such good and salutary objects. I need scarcely observe how much it is to be desired that those who devote themselves to intellectual pursuits should become acquainted with each other, and compare notes, so that, from this mental friction, light may be struck for the benefit of the Republic, and a spirit of honorable emulation be aroused and encouraged. The citizens of this District, members of Congress, and those who are sojourners amongst us, or transient visiters ought to feel much gratified at the announcement of this proposed scientific reunion. There is no place in this country which affords greater advantages, in proportion to its size, for men such as those who are especially invited to attend—no city where a week or so can be spent with more pleasure and profit than

ours. That it is the interest, in every point of view, of our citizens to encourage and facilitate this meeting, by their immediate countenance and support and hospitality towards these visitors, there can be no doubt whatever. And, inasmuch as we have high and influential names pledged to the execution of the project, and able pens enlisted in the cause, there is every reason to anticipate a favorable issue, not as having any very great or important effect upon the onward march of mind, but as establishing a precedent, and beginning in a course which I trust will not be abandoned without good cause. As the committee appointed at the meeting of December last for the purpose of memorializing Congress and appealing to the public in behalf of the National Institute are well fitted for the task, and their appeal will be published in due course of time, I shall not dwell any longer on the subject for the present, but pass on to my other points, with the expression of a hope that Congress will, as far as lies in its power, favor and encourage the projected meeting of next April, and that the public will give it their patronage and support.

Upon the subject of embracing practical agriculture within the operation of the Smithsonian bequest, I find, fortunately, to my hand, a very interesting and valuable memorial of Charles Lewis Fleischmann, of this city, in which he urges the utility and importance of establishing an agricultural school at the seat of Government connected with the above bequest. My readers, who may wish to inform themselves about the plan of that gentleman in detail, can do so by referring to Doc. No. 70 of 25th Congress, 3d session. The date of the memorial is December 8, 1838.

The memorialist presented a plan of such an institution, with designs for the buildings and estimates for all the requisites, and concludes with the following words: "Such an institution, being the first in the United States, would be the nursery of scientific agriculturists for the whole Union. Their education should be as perfect as possible, to enable them to qualify themselves to serve as directors, professors, and superintendents for similar establishments. This institution is calculated for one hundred pupils, and the number should be increased, by degrees, from the profit of the farm. The lectures should be free, and the price of board moderate, as half of the number of the pupils should be practically employed every day on the farm."

There is no intelligent man in this country who does not admit the importance of agricultural pursuits. There is no one who will deny

that the farmers of this country are the bone and sinew of the land, and that the agricultural interests and influence are gaining in weight and importance with the onward march of this Republic. Therefore it is essential and discreet to encourage every plan that affords a prospect of improving the cultivation of the soil and the condition of the cultivators. And I will be bold enough to assert that the plan above alluded to, of uniting an agricultural institution with that of the Smithsonian Bequest, is admirably calculated to produce the results desired, and to ameliorate and render more comfortable and secure the condition of the farmer and planter.

From the halls of this agricultural establishment will be annually scattered throughout the land a large number of active, industrious, and well-educated youths, who will, in their turn, disseminate the results of their studies, industry, and experience far and near, amongst the community where their lots shall be cast. The lights of science will be brought to bear upon the subject, and a new era will dawn for American agriculturists, who will be forced to improve their minds and acquire new stores of knowledge, in order to keep pace with the improvements which learned and practical men are constantly inventing and introducing into use. I need hardly insist upon the immense advantages resulting from this intellectualizing a profession, which has been charged, unjustly in most instances, with being manual and mechanical, beside the actual and pecuniary benefit for agriculturists, by teaching them how to grow better and more productive grains, to enrich their soil, and improve their stock and utensils, which must necessarily be the case upon the adoption of the plan of Mr. Fleischmann, or something of the kind.

In one of my preceding letters, whilst upon the subject of the improvement of the Mall, in connexion with the Smithsonian Bequest, I suggested that a choice botanical garden, similar to that of the "Jardin des Plantes" at Paris, should be established and placed under competent management. Our ministers, consuls, and foreign agents, officers of the army and navy, should be directed to make collections of plants and seeds, and our citizens be requested to do the same, for the use of that garden, and the Smithsonian Fund be held ready to pay for their purchase and cost of transportation, &c. The collection of plants, &c., of the Exploring Expedition, now within the grounds of the Patent Office, should be joined to the

Smithsonian botanical garden when established, and the public be invited to send specimens to the same at the cost of the Institution. Thus will be gradually established a nursery for that important branch of agriculture, and the liberality of Government and individuals redound to the general advantage and credit of the country. I would suggest that this Government should endeavor to purchase Mount Vernon as a model farm for the Smithsonian Institution. It is within a convenient distance of Washington, is capable of improvement, and, under the cultivation of the pupils of the agricultural school in this city, must pay for itself within a certain time, and will afterwards, most probably, meet the expenses of the establishment. The consideration, also, that the Government thus becomes proprietor of a spot hallowed in the eyes of every true American as having been the residence of the Father of his Country, and will have it in its power to open to the public a place now necessarily closed to them, in a great measure, by its being private property, ought to render Congress well disposed to take the matter into favorable consideration, and the community at large anxious for the acquisition. How appropriate is it, and how grateful we may fancy it will be to the spirit of that great man, who was a practical tiller of the earth, that the land by him cultivated so long should pass into the hands of the public, for whose good he ever labored, and, through the instrumentality of the bequest of the philanthropic Smithson, that that branch of knowledge and source of national wealth and prosperity, of which, when living, he was so devoted a follower and ornament, may be yet made to add to the honor, if possible, which has immortalized his memory, and to the advantage of the agricultural interests of the land.

I merely throw out this suggestion as one which may have some claim to a serious consideration; and, being a mere tyro myself in the subject to which I have devoted these few lines, I make it with all due diffidence and deference to the opinions of others better informed than I am.

I trust, however, that this reference to the memorial in question, and the few reflections which I have hurriedly indulged in on this occasion, may induce some minds to think upon the matter, and aid in effecting something, in the way thus pointed out, for the benefit of the agricultural interests of this country.

Yours, respectfully,

J. C. B.

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE.

LETTER No. X.

WASHINGTON, *February 10, 1844.*

MESSRS. EDITORS: Those of your readers who honor my lucubrations with a perusal, by reference to my second letter will find that I then dwelt briefly upon the history of the National Institute, and urged its claims upon public notice and encouragement. I now return to the subject, and shall devote the present number to a further discussion of this important and interesting question.

The habitual readers of your columns cannot fail being struck with the frequent and often very able and instructive articles to which you give admittance, under the head of "National Institute Papers," containing correspondence from every section of the globe, and accompanying valuable and interesting donations to the cabinet of the association. This fact speaks for itself. It proves that its members are active in the march of improvement, and that the Institute is proud of being the channel through which so much information is given to the public. That these contributions to knowledge will go on increasing, with the increase and prosperity of the Institute, cannot be doubted. That its means of instruction and usefulness may be so increased and enlarged should be the wish of every intelligent citizen, and with that wish should be exhibited an active co-operation and efficient assistance, in the cause of science and human knowledge, of which the Institute now stands so much in need.

Let us lend an ear and our favorable attention to the strong and eloquent appeal of the Hon. JOSEPH R. INGERSOLL, of Philadelphia, who, in his preamble to the proceedings of the Board of Management of the National Institute, held at the office of the Secretary of State, on the 23d December of the last year, uses the following words: "A monthly record of contributions reflects honor upon the kindness and public spirit of the donors, whose numbers are daily increasing, and whose good will knows no bounds. But the proof of their taste and kind feeling are imperfectly provided for, and sometimes altogether neglected, from the narrow fortunes of the infant establishment. There is no ascertained place of permanent or even secure deposite. There is no fund from which supplies, in any degree proportioned to daily necessities, can be derived. A

‘ few voluntary contributors to a precarious and inadequate treasury
 ‘ have furnished, as they might be able, a portion of the expenses
 ‘ which are required, and have in many instances received into
 ‘ their care, for the moment, objects of interest which could not be
 ‘ provided for elsewhere. It never was expected that a national
 ‘ establishment could subsist upon individual bounty alone. When
 ‘ it shall have derived dignity and confidence from the permanent
 ‘ encouragement of the Congress of the United States, it may well
 ‘ be hoped that private munificence will frequently pour out its
 ‘ stores, and that a laudable pride will be felt in mingling personal
 ‘ associations and favors with the steady support contributed by the
 ‘ Government. A period has now arrived when legislative assist-
 ‘ ance may be expected without arrogance, and sought without pre-
 ‘ sumption.”

It thus being asserted by a distinguished member of the House of Representatives, that the present is the fit time for urging the claims of the National Institute before Congress, or, in his own words, “that the period has now arrived when legislative assistance may be expected without arrogance, and sought without presumption,” I may be allowed to suggest a way for that desirable action to be rendered efficient, and to express the hope that the gentleman himself, from whom I have just quoted, may be induced to take the matter in hand, and to associate his name, already so well known and respected, with an enterprise of the utmost public interest and importance.

I find, by reference to the 8th volume of the Laws of the United States, that, on the 14th July, 1832, lots to the value of \$25,000, within the city of Washington, were voted to the Columbian College; that, on the same day, lots to the amount of \$20,000 were appropriated, in equal proportions, to the two charitable institutions, Saint Vincent’s Orphan Asylum and the Washington City Orphan Asylum; and, finally, that \$25,000 worth of lots were also voted, by act approved 2d March, 1833, to Georgetown College. Your readers who may wish to consult these acts, will find those of July, 1832, in vol. 8 of said laws, pages 713, 714, and that referring to Georgetown College, same volume, page 832.

Now, I take it, that these appropriations, which do honor to the Congress by whom they were passed, were so voted because the establishments receiving the said bounty were devoted to the diffu-

sion of knowledge and to the holy cause of charity. They had no other claim on the liberality of that body, than the deep interest which all intelligent and humane men should feel in such matters. That such liberality, when humanity and the cause of science plead for a favorable hearing, will ever meet with the approbation of the People, when they are made aware of the urgency and justice of the case, I feel exceeding sure. Then, why should not Congress now, when an appeal is made to them in behalf of an institution which claims to be national, and therefore embracing the whole country within its scope and influence, and devotes itself exclusively to the diffusion of knowledge among mankind, imitate the noble example thus set them in 1832 and '33, and place at the disposal of our Institute property or money equal at least to the amount voted to the two meritorious colleges above mentioned? The very same reasons that prevailed upon their predecessors, and even still stronger ones, should induce the members now legislating in the Capitol to behave handsomely in the present emergency, and, by an appropriate, liberal, and timely assistance, rescue the infant institute from its actual troubles and embarrassments. If it was constitutional, lawful, and expedient to vote money, or its equivalent, for establishments of public charity and education in 1832, it is certainly equally constitutional, lawful, and expedient to do so in 1844. If it be proper and wise in one year to encourage the instructors of our youth, it is certainly equally imperative, if not more so, to continue that encouragement as the Republic grows older, larger, and more able to contribute to an undertaking so replete with public and private blessings.

I say, then, to the members of the present Congress, that the precedents thus exhibited in support of the claim which the National Institute is about to make officially, and I trust promptly, for assistance at their hands, should and must have great weight in their minds, and force them, as it were, to make another appropriation of the kind for the benefit of an association thus devoted to the cause of knowledge and improvement. The Institute has a right to claim assistance, and will be satisfied, I suppose, with being placed on a similar footing with the Georgetown and Columbian Colleges. But, as the public property within the precincts of the city has lost much of its value since the time of said grants, it is but just that Congress (if persuaded to act favorably in the case)

should see that the Institute actually receives a sum equal to those received by the before mentioned seminaries of education. This assistance, if given promptly, will be sufficient to snatch the Institute from the perils and difficulties with which it is surrounded, and give it the means and spirit to go on with accelerated pace in the path of honor and usefulness. It thus being clearly a right in the National Institute to have the same justice at least meted out to it as was the case in the preceding instances, I would advise the gentlemen (if the idea shall not have already presented itself to their minds) who compose the committee detailed to draught a memorial to Congress in behalf of the association they represent; to adopt these acts as precedents and vouchers, and to bring the matter in the proper shape strongly and warmly before our *National Councils*, thus called upon to assist and encourage a *national* establishment.

The urgency of the case—the past services of the National Institute in the march of intellect—the materials collected from every quarter of the globe for giving additional impulse to that onward march of mind—the numerous influential, well-informed, and scientific men who have the honor of calling themselves members, and their daily contributions to the stores of human knowledge—and the pressing necessities of the infant establishment—all these considerations, which will, beyond doubt, be feelingly and ably urged in the forthcoming memorial, must, it is to be sincerely hoped, produce the desired effect upon the minds and hearts of those under whose care the National Treasury is placed, and convince them that justice, policy, humanity, and good sense all unite in instructing them how they should act in a case having such strong and irresistible claims upon their kind attention and liberality.

I have the honorable member from Philadelphia as my endorser when I state, that the contributions to the cabinets of the National Institute are valuable and numerous; that, unfortunately, there is no place where the boxes can be deposited, or their contents be seen or preserved; so that rare and most interesting specimens from far-off countries are actually going to decay, and lie hidden in out-of-the-way corners and cellars, for want of the adequate means to procure a fit place for their safe-keeping and exhibition. I have myself received the assurances of gentlemen, whose word cannot be doubted, and who have personal knowledge in the matter, that the importance, size, number, and value of the collections now

scattered about at the Departments, in private rooms, garrets, and cellars, (and all belonging to the National Institute,) would astonish the public if a list and examination could be made. Is it not then a pity that all these treasures, which are as yet for the most part concealed from the public eye, should rot away in unknown places, whilst the collections of the Exploring Expedition are snugly stowed in proper cases, and open to the inspection of the curious? If Congress hesitated not to use the public moneys for the benefit of an expedition which was in a great degree scientific, and the results of which I doubt not will be of general interest and advantage, why should it now pause when an institution, whose object is also scientific, whose collections do not yield, as I am informed, in value, variety, number, and interest to those just referred to, applies to it for assistance and for the means of preserving those collections from destruction? In making this remark, I do not want to be understood as casting any reflection upon the Exploring Expedition. I am well disposed to believe that it was well conducted, and that its results are valuable. I merely wish, in speaking of it in conjunction with the collections of the National Institute, to observe, that the same reason which induced the Government to give those of that expedition so fit a place for exhibition, ought, to a certain degree, to induce Congress to make some provision for the safe-keeping of the cabinets and library of the Institute, which are intended for the use and benefit of the nation at large. Besides the collections formerly deposited at the different Departments, consisting of presents to this Government, or its Ministers, Secretaries, or foreign agents, from other Governments or Potentates, pictures, treaties, &c., have been placed under the care of the National Institute, and are now exhibited in the hall of the Patent Office, devoted principally to the cabinets of the Exploring Expedition. Thus a union has been established between the Government of the United States and the Institute, which is employed as its agent and trustee to the above extent. It seems to me, therefore, that, in addition to the claims which that society has upon Governmental support and patronage, based upon the precedents before alluded to, the fact of this trusteeship and the services so rendered, should put it upon the footing of an actual and bona fide possessor of a vested right upon the liberality and justice of Congress. By enabling the Institute, in the manner designated, to pre-

serve and exhibit its cabinets of curiosities, this Government will add to the interest which attaches to the collections so entrusted to its keeping, and make it the interest of the guardian to attend to their proper exhibition and preservation. I know that a small sum of money was appropriated on the occasion of the transfer of the articles in question, but, inasmuch as this is not merely a subject for the discussion of positive and actual vested rights, but one that appeals to public sympathy and liberality, I trust this employment of the Institute by the Government may be considered as a precedent to show that there are honest and expedient ways of meeting and avoiding the constitutional objections, which so often unluckily arrest and retard the cause of public education and improvement. At all events, I most devoutly hope that even if these suggestions of mine be found impracticable, (but for which I ask at least a fair hearing and trial,) some expedient may be discovered for saving a meritorious and useful institution from ruin and decay—some way for rescuing its valuable collections from destruction.

In my next I shall continue the discussion of this subject, and dwell awhile upon the question of exchanges; and, until then, I am yours, respectfully,

J. C. B.

LETTER No. XI.

ON THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE—INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC EXCHANGES.

FEBRUARY 17, 1844.

Since the publication of my last number, a strong appeal has been made through your columns to Congress and the public at large for aid in defraying the expenses of the meeting of the National Institute in this city, on the first Monday of April next, and the printing of the proceedings, &c., on that interesting occasion. The appeal gives a melancholy account of the present condition of the Institute, its inability to make provision for the exhibition of its large and valuable collections, and the rare and important presents lately received from ALEXANDRE VATTEMARE, of Paris. The pecuniary and other aid of the citizens and friends of knowledge is earnestly requested, and the appeal is perfectly authorized by the unusual interest of this great scientific reunion, and by the fact that some of our most able and well informed men of learning are under

promise to deliver lectures or send papers to be read. It is with a rational hope that the citizens of this District in particular, in view of the interest of the proposed meeting, will not turn a deaf ear to this warm and well-worded appeal, that the National Institute presents itself to public notice and support under its existing difficulties.

You will remember that I urged the claims of the Institute upon the favorable notice of Congress as at least equal, although in fact they are superior, to those which called forth the appropriations in 1831 and 1832 for the benefit of the District colleges, and that, whilst insisting upon the right of that association to expect public support, it recommends itself in a peculiar manner to the patronage of Government. It is to be hoped that the committee of the Institute, appointed to memorialize Congress at the present session, will soon make their appeal, and that the two Houses will be found disposed to give them a fair and impartial hearing and a liberal consideration of their case. I flatter myself that public attention here and elsewhere has been attracted to the condition, means, services, and future career of usefulness of the Institute, and that the present is the fit time for bringing before Congress and the people such appeals and statements as may give them correct information on the subject and enlist their attention and sympathy. I feel that the hour is not far distant when the community will be made alive to the importance of this subject, and the current of popular approbation turned towards a too long neglected institution. This hope and belief have induced me to devote my pen to a brief account of the operations, plans, and services of the National Institute, and to an appeal to the citizens of this Republic in its behalf.

I have before me an interesting letter from Mr. VATTEMARE, dated Paris, the 10th December last, and addressed to the Corresponding Secretary of the National Institute, extracts from which were published in your paper of the 12th ultimo. That letter announced the transmission of a variety of interesting articles for the Institute, and that a still larger number remained in his hands awaiting further instructions from Washington, and the means to defray the expenses to be incurred on the occasion. It is well known in this country that Mr. VATTEMARE has devoted his time, money, talents, and perseverance to the subject of Exchanges, and that the attention of well-informed men in Europe and in America has been gradually more and more attracted to the progress of this praise-

worthy enterprise. If he succeeds in carrying his plans into operation, a new era will dawn for the march of intelligence and mind. The multiplication and the increasing cheapness of the communications between the Old and New Worlds, will aid very materially indeed in the full realization of his hopes. The two hemispheres will thus be brought close together by the bonds of mutual benefits; and, as nothing serves more to the preservation and perpetuity of good will between nations than the interchange of their intellectual productions, upon a well regulated system of national reciprocity, Mr. VATTEMARE, and all those who co-operate with him on the subject of Exchanges, will have discovered the very best and most practical means of preserving the influence of peace in the civilized world, and of aiding in the diffusion of knowledge among men. I am thus emphatic in my allusion to the writer of the letter in question because I consider this move of his as the first in that great impulse which I wish the National Institute to initiate in this continent. I feel perfectly authorized in asserting, from the value of the books, engravings, charts, &c., a part whereof have been received in this city and are waiting for public assistance, so that they and the other collections of the Institute may be exhibited for public instruction and amusement, that the announcement of the fact that there is so philanthropic an individual as VATTEMARE in the great metropolis of France, who has collected, and is still collecting valuable materials for the benefit of this country, ought to interest every citizen who has the least pretension to information or education. It will be seen by the recent publications on the part of the National Institute, that it cannot afford to pay the required expenses on a further transmission from Paris; and I trust that the discredit of that want of ability to take the necessary steps in this matter will not be allowed to rest at the door of the American people, who are thus called upon to assist in carrying out an enterprise which concerns, and is sure to benefit them most materially. The way whereby that pecuniary assistance may be made to reach the destination where good may be effected, has been, over and over again, plainly indicated. The will is all that is requisite, and that will I hope exists among the people. Whilst thus endeavoring to aid in the realization of the plan of International Exchanges, by our co-operation and pecuniary assistance, through which our colleges, academies, Federal and State Governments, municipal corporations, scientific

and other institutions, &c., will receive the mental treasures of the Old World, it is exceedingly important and advisable that the system of domestic exchanges should be fostered and rendered efficient. The subject is, indeed, a vast and interesting one. The benefits to flow from the judicious operation of that system, extending, like the circulation of the blood in the human body, throughout the land, will be felt and made abundant in every section of the country. There is no public or private institution in the United States which makes it a part of its business to make collections in history, belles lettres, the fine arts, the exact sciences, agriculture, geology, mineralogy, astronomy, &c., that will not gain by adopting and carrying into effect a system of Exchanges with the National Institute. In return for the duplicates which that association may thus receive at different times, it will be enabled, from the size, value, and abundance of its own collections, to make a return in some article of interest which the person or persons so sending will be very much gratified to get in hand. It is an ascertained fact, that there are articles of rare value and interest, lying concealed and idle in the hands of individuals, which, if once transmitted to an institution where they might be brought to light and properly exhibited and taken care of, would aid much in the diffusion of general information, and afford much gratification to the public. Already has the Institute called upon persons possessing such articles, and invited them to transmit the same for the use of its cabinets, and I am happy to say the appeal has met with a prompt and flattering response. But much remains undone. It is absolutely necessary that some well-conceived and well-ordered plan should be adopted, whereby public institutions and private persons shall be sure of receiving equivalents and being honorably mentioned for their liberality. This can be best effected by making Washington the headquarters of Domestic Exchanges, and the National Institute the agent and receiver.

If the appeal which has been just made to the public, and that which is soon to go before Congress, produce the fruit which we all desire and anticipate, then will that association have it in its power to defray all the expenses attendant upon the operation of the system, and to provide a proper and convenient place for a public exhibition of the specimens and articles which it may receive in exchange for those which can be spared from its collections.

Every person, and all collections of individuals, whether lay or clerical, scientific or artistical, mechanical or agricultural, political or municipal, should feel immediately interested in this matter. By sending their superfluities to the National Institute in the way of exchange, they are clearly the gainers in every sense of the phrase. They part with that which they can easily spare, and receive that which they have not. This reciprocity becomes soon the means of spreading knowledge far and wide, and those who are desirous of being benefactors of their race are amply provided with all the materials required for their great and philanthropic purpose. We are in an age when knowledge is power. The gigantic strides of man in the march of mind are waxing more wonderful and accelerated with every passing year. It is emphatically an age of experiments and daring undertakings. Steam has almost annihilated distance, and the pen has nearly superseded the sword in the settlement of questions between nations. Space is becoming a word of no meaning before the startling results of the application of electro magnetism, and the day is not remote when those who are now severed by deserts, mountains, and vast oceans, will be made neighbors by communications, almost miraculous and incredible for their frequency, economy, safety, and celerity. All these being either facts or events highly probable, (for they cast their shadows before,) it becomes every man, who wishes to escape the charge of being a sluggard, and indifferent to what is transpiring around him, to gird his loins for the race and to store his mind for the encounter. But as knowledge is the fruit of study and experience, it is necessary that we should have those two important elements at our command; and not one method more practical and advantageous can be discovered than the association of men actuated by a laudable thirst after instruction, who together do that which as individuals it would be vain for them to attempt. Among the numerous associations for intellectual purposes established in this country, the National Institute has taken a highly respectable position, and has exercised a great and salutary influence upon the public mind. Having proved their sincere devotion to the good cause which they are pledged to advance and support by every honorable means, the members of the Institute have deemed the subject of National and Domestic Exchanges worthy of a most strenuous effort to carry it into operation, and for that purpose earnestly

invite the co-operation of the public by pecuniary and other assistance. Again do I say, let not their expectations be disappointed, and a new era will dawn upon this hemisphere, and a new consolidation be added to the weakened bonds of our glorious Union.

I would therefore suggest that the duplicates of books, charts, documents, geological and other specimens, which may be in the possession of the Executive, Congress, colleges, public and private academies, mercantile, agricultural, mechanical, literary, and other associations, should be laid aside, under the care of some competent individual, to be transmitted to the National Institute, as soon as it is able to defray the expenses of transportation, and possesses a proper place for exhibition. I would recommend that individuals who take an interest in such matters make their collections and distributions for a like purpose and in like manner; and that the National Institute inform Mr. VATTEMARE that it is making all possible efforts to induce Congress and the people to aid and co-operate in his honorable and philanthropic project. I would also suggest that the National Institute, so soon as it shall have collected a sufficient sum for the purpose, open, through a committee appointed for that special purpose, a correspondence with Government, the heads of public and private colleges and institutions, and such of our citizens or foreigners who may be interested in the matter, inviting again their assistance, indicating the means of transmission, promising to defray the necessary expenses, and to provide a place for their preservation and exhibition.

The Institute will be thus materially assisted in the plan of establishing a great national gallery of curiosities, learning, literature, and the fine arts, at the metropolis of this Republic, and the people be convinced that its progress and success are deeply interesting to the country, and highly important for the advance of knowledge and education.

I would advise such of my readers as feel interested in the subject, to read a very interesting article entitled "A Plan of Exchanges," by Dr. E. FOREMAN, of the Washington University of Baltimore, dated December 10, 1841, and published in the second Bulletin of the National Institute, p. 168.

My next shall be devoted to a brief account of the origin, progress, and present state of the Depôt of Charts and Instruments, or National Observatory, in this city, under the superintendence of

Lieut. J. M. GILLIS, of our navy, and the Observatory at Georgetown College, assigned to the care of the Rev. JAMES CURLEY.

Until then, I remain yours, respectfully,

J. C. B.

LETTER No. XII.

INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC EXCHANGES; DEPOT OF CHARTS AND INSTRUMENTS, AND GEORGETOWN COLLEGE OBSERVATORY.

WASHINGTON, *March 9, 1844.*

GENTLEMEN: Having committed the oversight in my last of overlooking a very interesting report by Mr. MARKOE, of a Committee on Exchanges, to the National Institute, consisting of Col. ABERT, Mr. MARKOE, Mr. DAYTON, and Dr. KING, on the 13th December, 1841, and which has received the sanction of that body, (see 2d Bulletin, pp. 162, and 164,) before proceeding to the immediate topics of this number, I take the occasion of referring my readers to that paper as one well worthy a perusal.

The committee recommend: 1st. That a system of exchanges be entered upon without delay. 2d. That the curator and assistants be directed, for this purpose, to separate all duplicates, except those from the Exploring Expedition; and that they select and label such specimens as are to be sent to individuals or societies. 3d. That the first step taken be to discharge the obligations of exchange already incurred by the Institution. 4th. That a committee be appointed, to whom the curator shall submit all sets of specimens thus set aside for any given exchanges, who shall decide upon the equivalency before said specimens shall be boxed up and sent off. 5th. That in all cases of difficulty which may arise, reference must be made to the President or Vice President of the Institution for decision, who will, if they conceive it necessary, submit the question to the Institution. 6th. That a book be kept by the curator, subject at all times to the inspection of the committee, in which must be noted the contents of each box or package, lists of the articles for which they are the equivalents, the name and place of the society or individual to whom one set is to be sent and from whom the other has been received.

The support, co-operation, and patronage of the public are all that is wanting to enable the Institute to carry a proper plan of In-

ternational and Domestic Exchanges into successful operation, and it is to be hoped that the community will be awakened and interested in this highly important subject.

I cannot better enter upon the discussion of the grand and sublime topic of astronomy than by prefixing the eloquent language of the Hon. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, in his report to Congress on the Smithsonian Fund, made on the 26th January, 1839, and from which I have already quoted. (See report No. 857, 27th Congress, 2d session.) The venerable chairman remarks:

“The express object of an observatory is the *increase* of knowledge by *new discovery*. The physical relations between the firmament of heaven and the globe allotted by the Creator of all to be the abode of man are discoverable only by the organ of the eye. Many of these relations are indispensable to the existence of human life, and perhaps of the earth itself. Who can conceive the idea of a world without a sun, but must connect it with the extinctions of light and heat, of all animal life, of all vegetation and production; leaving the lifeless clod of matter to return to the primitive state of chaos, or to be consumed by elemental fire? The influence of the moon—of the planets, our next door neighbors of the solar system—of the fixed stars—scattered over the blue expanse in multitudes exceeding the power of human computation, and at distances of which imagination herself can form no distinct conception; the influence of all these upon the globe which we inhabit, and upon the condition of man, its dying and deathless inhabitant, is great and mysterious, and, in the search for final causes, to a great degree inscrutable to his finite and limited faculties. The extent to which they are discoverable is and must remain unknown; but to the vigilance of a sleepless eye, to the toil of a tireless hand, and to the meditations of a thinking, combining, and analyzing mind, secrets are successively revealed not only of the deepest import to the welfare of man in his earthly career, but which seem to lift him from the earth to the threshold of his eternal abode; to lead him blindfold up to the council chamber of Omnipotence; and there, stripping the bandage from his eyes, bid him look undazzled at the throne of God.”

The study of the heavens, and all the phenomena connected therewith, is one which has occupied mankind from the earliest

ages of the world. Its importance, interest, value, and necessity have been too well and often asserted and conceded for me to indulge in a disquisition on the subject, even did time and space allow me to dilate upon a topic so well suited to exercise the reason, delight the fancy, improve the heart, and give scope to the play of imagination. Our own fair land, thank God, is not a sluggard in the matter. Public attention has been attracted to the necessity of constructing observatories and creating a body of scientific and practical men, who may make that study a profession. The Government of this Republic, amongst others, has deemed the subject worthy its most serious notice, and a bill to erect a small observatory, in connexion with the *Depôt of Charts and Instruments* which was established in 1830, was introduced by the Committee on Naval Affairs, through Mr. MALLORY, its chairman, on the 15th of March, 1842, and to which the observatory now in course of construction under the superintendence of Lieut. J. M. GILLISS owes its existence. (See report No. 449, 27th Congress, second session.) It is due to justice to state, and it is a fact of which I have personal knowledge, that the passage of the bill in question was owing in a great degree to the exertions and perseverance of that officer, to whose care the edifice alluded to has been very properly confided. Having been sent by the Secretary of the Navy to Europe, for the purpose of visiting most of the prominent observatories of the old world, of consulting with the most distinguished men of science and astronomical knowledge, and procuring good and suitable instruments, Mr. GILLISS returned several months afterwards to this country, and soon set about the construction of the *depôt*; that is, in the month of April last, upon that fine and commanding site called University Square.

As the report of Lieut. GILLISS to the Secretary of the Navy, dated Washington, November 23d, of the last year, may not have met the eyes of some of my readers, who would like to learn some details on the subject, I quote from that paper, as the best and most condensed account that could be offered.

The report states that the principal part of the new *Depôt* is upon the line of D street north, and is ninety-five feet above ordinary high-water mark; that the central house is fifty feet square, two stories and a basement high, and surmounted by a hemispherical revolving dome, resting on circular walls, elevated eight feet above

the roof. The height from the ground to the top of the balustrade surrounding the house is thirty-three feet, and to the top of the dome is fifty-four feet. It has three wings: the eastern and the western twenty-six feet three inches long, twenty-one wide, and eighteen feet high; the southern twenty feet long, and same width and height as the others; a passage-way ten feet square divides it from the house. The masonry for the foundations of the walls and piers is of the most massive and durable kind—the greater portion of that for the piers and circular wall being laid with the best hydraulic cement. The piers of granite were all erected in July, and the brick-work completed early in October last; the roofs have been sheathed, and the coppering will be finished in a few days; a part of the floors has been laid, the furnace for heating the building put up, the cast iron work for the revolving dome fitted, and plastering commenced. Mr. GILLISS expects to complete the work during the month of May next.

The magnetic observatory is ninety feet to the southwest of the preceding, and is, with its entrance-way, entirely below the ground, the roof of the former being rather more than four feet from the surface; the entrance to it is from the basement, through a subterranean passage ninety-three feet long. This observatory is in the form of a cross; is seventy feet long in each direction, ten feet wide, and ten feet high. It is built entirely of heavy North Carolina heart pine, secured throughout with wood pins and copper nails, on dry-powdered clay, rammed hard around the outer planking, and is so constructed that any piece may be taken out for repair. An inside sheathing permits the air to circulate freely around it, to prevent internal dampness; and an octagonal dome in the centre, fitted with double windows, admits sufficient light for ordinary purposes, while the volume of air between the windows is such as will prevent sudden changes of temperature. This building was covered over early in August, and is completed, except a little paint-work. The range of temperature within it, since fitting the door and windows, as shown by self-registering thermometers, has been from 55° to $58\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ Fahrenheit, equal $3\frac{1}{2}$.

The *great telescope and the comet-searcher* will be completed within the specified time at Munich, viz. January 1st, 1844; the *mural circle* will probably be shipped from London about the 1st of December; the *transit for prime vertical*, made by PISTON, at Berlin,

under the supervision of ENCKE, was shipped from Hamburgh October 18th ; the *transit for meridian* made by ERTLS, at Munich, is doubtless on its way to the United States. In case no delay occurs in the receipt of these instruments, he expects to have them all mounted and ready for use about the 1st of July next. The *magnetic instruments* were received about ten days before date of report, and were then in course of adjustment in the Observatory ; the *meteorological instruments* were received last May and are safely preserved, the erection of the registering anemometer being delayed until the completion of a superintendent's house.

Having allowed Mr. GILLISS to explain in his own words all that had been done, up to the date of his report, for carrying into effect the design of Congress, I will now proceed to take a brief notice of the sister observatory of Georgetown College, which owes its existence to private liberality, and, whilst it does great credit to the most worthy Professor, the Rev. JAMES CURLEY, under whose immediate care it is placed, at the same time is another proof, if such were needed, of the love of knowledge which characterizes most eminently the distinguished order of which he is a member.

The donation to which the College Observatory owes its construction was made in 1841. In 1842 a plan was agreed upon, and a correspondence opened with European artists, and some of the instruments ordered. The building was commenced in the summer of 1843, and is nearly finished. The edifice is about four hundred yards west by north of the College, on a rising ground, and commands a free view of the Government Depôt or Observatory just referred to, which is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the southeast. The building is sixty feet long, east and west, and about thirty feet wide, and has three rooms on the ground floor. The eastern and western rooms are fifteen feet high, and are intended for the meridian instruments. The middle part of the building is thirty feet square and about thirty high, with a balustrade all around, as is the case with the walls of the meridian rooms. A third story of framework is constructed within the balustrade of the middle building. It is thirty feet square, with a rotatory hemispherical dome twenty feet in diameter. This dome rests upon twenty conical eight-inch rollers ; there is a footway three feet wide all around between the dome and balustrade. A solid piece of mason-work is constructed, the top of which passes through the floor of the room formed by

the dome, and upon which is to be placed an equatorial refracting telescope.

The principal instruments for this Observatory, are, 1st, an equatorial refractor, with a $7\frac{1}{2}$ inch object-glass, and ten feet focal length, having eleven eye-pieces, six of which are adapted to a position micrometer; this instrument is being made by GAMBIER, in Paris, and will be finished in June next; 2d, a forty-six inch meridian circle, from SIMMS, of London; 3d, a transit instrument or meridian telescope of the best construction. This instrument has an object-glass of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter and 76 inches focal length, was made by ESTEL and SON, of Munich, in 1843, has been sent, but not yet received at the College. Several smaller and necessary instruments with time-pieces have been received from London and Munich. Another sidereal clock (a present from T. ROBERT JENKINS, Esq., of Baltimore) is expected from London.

The College intend to collect an astronomical library, and with that view have on a hand number of excellent works upon the subject.

I feel peculiarly happy in having it in my power to give some information about two Institutions which are not as well and generally known as they deserve to be, and to congratulate the people of this District in particular, and the country at large, that we possess in our midst such interesting and valuable agents in the diffusion of knowledge among men, as well as ornamental specimens of architecture.

I shall not here insist upon the practical benefits likely to follow upon the successful operation of these two Observatories. I think such an attempt would be a reflection upon the intelligence and good sense of my readers. Let the subject speak for itself. Time, experience, the common consent of all learned and sensible men, and the public interest felt in every civilized country in the matter, prove, more than words of mine could do, that astronomy, and its co-ordinate branches, have been deemed, in every age, clime, and Government, as of the greatest importance and value.

Let it then be the pride, as it is the duty and interest of our Government and the people, to co-operate in carrying out the wishes and expectations of learned men on the subject; so that those who devote themselves to high and useful studies may enjoy that assistance, appreciation, and notice which should ever attend upon

merit, and our Republic assume by such instrumentality a respectable position among those nations who have distinguished themselves by their attention to intellectual pursuits.

Those who may wish to obtain more details in relation to the Depôt of Charts and Instruments will do well to consult the description of the buildings and instruments furnished for the Army and Navy Chronicle by Lieut. Gilliss. It was published, with an engraving of the Observatory, in the Chronicle of June 1, 1843.

Yours, respectfully,

J. C. B.

THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS, AND WASHINGTON MONUMENT—RECAPITULATION—CONGRESS AND THE CITY OF WASHINGTON.

LETTER No. XIII.

WASHINGTON, *March 23, 1844.*

GENTLEMEN: Since the appearance of my last number I have observed by the papers that certain moves have been made in Congress, which, from their importance and the immediate bearing on some of the subjects upon which I have dilated for several months past, call for due notice at my hands.

I allude to the report of Mr. Pratt, of New York, from the Committee on Public Buildings, made the 7th of the present month, and published in your paper of Monday last, and the bill proposed by the same public-spirited gentleman for the erection of a National Monument in this city.

The report in question, after stating that the Capitol and the grounds are in a good condition, and that the former requires but slight alterations and repairs in the roof and a general coat of paint on its exterior, recommends improvements in the jets d'eau and fountains, as also some trifling ones for the President's House, such as painting the exterior, sundry repairs to its offices, &c. After remarking that the State and Treasury Departments need but a few unimportant repairs and improvements, it goes on to recommend the erection of an additional, substantial, and fire-proof building on the ground south of the Navy Department, and ranging as near as possible therewith. This building is to be of brick, with a marble portico of six columns, the floors to be of brick, stairways, door jambs, window frames, sash, and shutters to be of iron, and the whole estimated to cost \$119,774. The committee recommend an

appropriation of \$28,275 to purchase certain lots and buildings necessary to the complete arrangement of the General Post Office, as also the erection of one of the wings to the main building of the Patent Office, as contemplated in the original plan, the same to be constructed of granite, and state that the office has on hand a fund which is very nearly sufficient to defray the expense attending the building in question. An appropriation (sum not named) is also recommended for the enlargement of the conservatory for the cultivation and preservation of the rare and curious plants of the Exploring Expedition. It is also recommended that the Mall be fenced in and planted.

The bill referred to proposes to erect a monument of three stories, the crypt or basement to contain the Statue of Washington by Greenough, (now lodged in a mere shed and which is an eyesore in the Capitol grounds,) with niches for the busts of the Presidents of the United States; the second story niches for statues of the illustrious men of the country; and the third to be a gallery for paintings, historical and national. The monument is to be 120 feet high, of the same size as the Rotundo, (100 feet in diameter,) the whole to be completed in eighteen months, cost \$100,000. It is proposed to call upon the Washington Monument Society of this city for an appropriation of the funds collected and on hand (say \$48,000) to aid in this work. I have seen the sketch made by Mr. Strickland, of Philadelphia, and consider it well adapted to the great national object in view. His name is a sufficient warranty in the matter.

I am particularly delighted to find that a move has been made in this last mentioned matter, as it confirms and agrees with the suggestion which I had the honor of making in my letter number VIII, and of urging upon the attention of Congress and the people as one of the utmost importance and practicability. I congratulate the country that it has in the legislative councils of the nation a man who, amid the storms and tumult of political and party excitement, has the patriotism and good taste to direct his attention to matters so interesting and important. It reflects equal honor upon his head and heart. The people of the whole country should feel interested in a prompt action on the subject-matter of the report and bill in question, and the inhabitants in this District ought, whilst expressing their gratitude for this attention to their immediate wants

and interests, to make their voice heard in support of this proposed public-spirited legislation.

I shall watch the progress of these two bills with great interest and anxiety, and trust that we may have in due course of time the great satisfaction of hailing their passage through both Houses, and enjoying the excellent effects likely to ensue upon their execution.

I have thus, gentlemen, complied so far with the promise I made through your columns the 6th of December last, by discussing in a hasty manner the interesting topics which presented themselves to my mind as matters of public concern. For the kind indulgence with which you have so long given me no small space in your crowded journal, you have my warmest thanks. That indulgence I will have to claim for some numbers more, deeming it important that I should enter upon the examination of certain other topics of much moment to the people of this Republic, and to this community in particular.

I have, therefore, in compliance with the engagement I entered into with my readers, given a sketch of the rise and progress of the National Institute. I have endeavored to show that its birth was auspicious, its motives and ends pure and practicable, its operations of general benefit. I have strived to prove that, being purely National and American, the Institute had a claim on the notice and patronage of Government and the people; that it has received the approbation of some of the first men at home and abroad, and that it contains within itself all the elements of usefulness if fostered and allowed a theatre for their operation. I have brought the best evidence of the present precarious and needy state of that Institution, and indicated a feasible and easy way of giving the assistance it so imperiously requires and so richly deserves. I have written on the subject of the Smithsonian Bequest, given its history and its present discreditable and neglected condition. The opinions of distinguished men have been cited to show that this neglect of a solemn duty on the part of the great trustee, our National Legislature, is a reproach to the country, and a stain that should be wiped off without delay. I have referred those whose duty it is to do something in the matter to Rush, Adams, Wayland, Preston, &c., for the mode of carrying out the will of the testator, and ventured upon sundry suggestions of my own, which can be seen by reference to my letters. I have endeavored to draw the attention of

Congress to the subject of providing a proper place for the statue of Washington, and of encouraging the fine arts by connecting with it a national gallery for paintings, statuary, and architectural designing.

I have urged the expediency and policy of rescuing the Mall from its present state of degradation, and of ornamenting it at least with the different trees of this country, and protecting it with a decent enclosure. This would be performing a part at least of the duties which Congress owe to the people at large and this city, in the matter of the public grounds and buildings. And although I trust the day is not far distant when that beautiful reservation will be made a worthy ornament of the national metropolis by the erection of statues, the digging of reservoirs, the construction of fountains, and making of avenues and walks, yet we would be content for the present with the provisions on the subject in Mr. Pratt's report first referred to. Having given facts and indulged in speculation on all these interesting subjects, I concluded my last letter by brief sketches of the Depôt of Charts and Instruments, and the Observatory at Georgetown College, both of which establishments are in the highest degree worthy of public notice and support, and add so much to the attractions of the District.

I hope that the discussion of these matters has not been found unnecessarily protracted, and that some light has been cast by my humble instrumentality upon topics which should interest more or less every intelligent and patriotic citizen of the Republic. If I have succeeded in giving any information or pleasure in aiding the march of mind, it matters not how little, I have been more than rewarded. My object has been purely to suggest something which might benefit my native city, and thus be of service ultimately to the country. My hopes are not great, my expectations by no means sanguine. But I know that truth is powerful and must prevail. I bide my time, and cast my bread upon the waters, having no other interest in the subject than that which every true citizen should feel. I feel that the realization of my hopes is not so quixotical or improbable as at first I was induced to imagine. Public men, in high places, are moving in the matter, and I please myself with the anticipation of the time when most of these things shall come to pass, and Washington be made what it was intended to be.

by the Father of the Republic, and its great founder and namesake, the pride and glory of a great Republic.

What a contrast to the indifference exhibited by our own Government on the subject of learning and intellectual improvement is the liberal conduct of one which we are taught to look upon as barbarian !

“Education,” says the author of ‘The Chinese as they are,’ “from what has been already said as forming the only path to distinction and eminence, and as inculcated in all their works, it will readily be supposed, is an object of primary importance among the Chinese. Nor is it limited or confined to one class, but is generally extended. Its importance was recognised, and was so well known in China, that a work written before the Christian era speaks of the ‘ancient system of instruction,’ which required that every town and village, down to a few families, should have a common school. *And it is worthy of remark how the general peace and prosperity of China has been promoted by the diffusion of intelligence and education throughout all classes.*

“Strict examinations, regulated by a fixed code of laws, have been instituted, designed solely to elicit this ‘true talent.’ At these examinations, which are open for all, it is decided who shall rise to distinction, and confer honor on himself and his descendants, and who shall live on and be forgotten.

“At the close of the second trial seventy-two are selected of the most intelligent out of the 10,000 assembled from the province, (speaking of Canton,) and an equal number from each of the other provinces, making in all about 1,300 for the whole empire. The fortunate persons are then publicly announced, and handbills are circulated far and wide, not only for the information of the candidates themselves, but also of their parents and kindred, who receive titles and honors in common with these favored relatives. Presents are then made to the triumphant scholars, and splendid apparel provided for them, so that they soon become rich and great. To-day they are dwelling in an humble cottage, and to-morrow they are introduced to the palaces of the powerful, and every where received with the greatest honor.

“The advantages of this system are evident. Caste is by this means abolished. *No privileged order is tolerated ; wealth and rank are unavailing to procure advancement, and the poor are enabled by*

exertion to obtain the highest distinctions. Each strains for the praise which is thus accessible. They say of Shan, who was raised to the throne by his talents and virtues: 'Shan was a man; I also am a man; if I do but exert myself I may be as great as he.' The stimulus thus given to energetic perseverance is immense, and the effect in encouraging learning incalculable.

"One of the most remarkable national peculiarities of the Chinese, observes Sir George Stanton, 'is their extraordinary addiction to letters, the general prevalence of literary habits, and the honorable pre-emption which, from the most remote period, has been universally conceded to that class exclusively devoted to literary pursuits.'

"Even now, 2,300 years after the death of Confucius, several individuals recognised as the actual heirs and representatives of the sage are decorated with honorary distinction, and maintained in a state of respectable independence at the public charge."

My readers will, I trust, excuse me for the length of this extract. I deemed it so pertinent to the points which I have so ardently urged upon the public attention, so rich in interest and instruction, that I ventured upon quoting more than the length or nature of my letters might seem to allow. Although it is neither asked nor expected that our Government or people should imitate the example thus set them by a nation which we cannot contend with in such matters, yet some lessons may be learned from the spectacle of this glorious republic of letters in that old and curious empire, with which we are now beginning an intercourse calculated to benefit us in other ways than commercially.

I propose, gentlemen, to discuss the following points in my ensuing numbers: I will endeavor to show, 1st. That the Constitution of the United States, and the acts of Congress in virtue and pursuance thereof have made this District the permanent seat of the Federal Government, and therefore nothing but an alteration to that effect in the Constitution can change it. 2d. That so far from having done too much for this city, Congress have not exercised that full liberality and justice which policy and the rights of its inhabitants demand. 3d. That this city being the metropolis of the nation, and therefore national property, the people of this country should feel directly interested in its improvement. And, 4th. To insist, therefore, upon a change of policy in its legislation

towards this city and District on the part of the great council of the nation, every member of which should consider himself our immediate representative.

For the present I remain, yours, truly,

J. C. B.

THE DUTIES AND RELATIONS OF CONGRESS TO THE CITY OF
WASHINGTON.

LETTER No. XIV.

WASHINGTON, *April 15, 1844.*

GENTLEMEN: I announced in my last my intention to discuss the following points: 1st. That the Constitution of the United States, and the act of Congress in pursuance thereof, made this District the *permanent* seat of the Federal Government, and, therefore, nothing but an alteration to that effect in the Constitution can change it. 2d. That so far from having done too much for this city, Congress have not exercised that full liberality and justice which policy and the rights of its inhabitants demand. 3d. That this city being the metropolis of the nation, and therefore, to a certain extent, national property, the people of this country should feel directly interested in its improvement. And, in the fourth place, to insist upon a change of policy in its legislation towards this city and District, on the part of the Great Council of the nation, every member of which should consider himself our immediate representative, and bound, therefore, to watch over and foster our interests.

In the discussion of these interesting and important topics, I shall endeavor to be as brief as the nature of the subject will admit.

Before proceeding to that discussion I would observe, that it is not because I entertain any apprehension of any existing intention on the part of Congress or the people to have the seat of Government removed, or because, if such intention actually did exist, there could be any reasonable anticipation of its being successful, that I venture into the arena, but inasmuch as attempts have been made at divers times, from motives more or less local and selfish, to have such a change carried into effect, I deem it well, in view of any similar attempts of the kind for the future, to throw together a few desultory and hurried observations on this important subject,

and to warn those whom it concerns against the bad results of such an action.

The authority under which Congress subsequently designated and accepted these ten miles square as the seat of the Federal Government of the United States, is to be found in section 8, 1st article of the Constitution, and reads as follows: "Congress shall have 'power 'to exercise exclusive legislation, in all cases whatsoever, 'over such District, (*not exceeding ten miles square,*) *as may, by cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become 'the seat of the Government of the United States,* and to exercise like 'authority over all places purchased by the consent of the legislature of the State in which the same shall be, for the erection of 'forts, magazines, arsenals, dock yards, and other useful buildings,' 'and 'to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for 'carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United 'States, or in any department or officer thereof.'"

Maryland having, by act passed 23d December, 1788, authorized her representatives in Congress to cede to the United States, for the seat of Government, any district in the State not exceeding ten miles square; and Virginia, imitating the example, by act of 3d December, 1789, the Congress of the United States, in pursuance of the foregoing section of the Constitution, signified its acceptance of the said cession, by act passed 16th July, 1790, entitled "An act for establishing the *temporary and permanent* seat of Government of the United States," the 1st section whereof reads as follows: "*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the 'United States in Congress assembled, That a district of territory not 'exceeding ten miles square, to be located as hereafter directed on 'the river Potomac, at some space between the mouths of the 'Eastern Branch and Conogocheague, be, and the same is hereby, 'accepted for the permanent seat of the Government of the United 'States.'*" The final cession of her portion of this District by Maryland was made by act passed 19th December, 1791.

It may be well to remark, before proceeding further, that the word "temporary" in the title of the act, refers to Philadelphia, whither the Government was to be removed from New York, where it then was located, there to sojourn until the first Monday of November, 1800, when it was to be transported to the District so

selected. To this consecutive action, then, of the Constitution, the States of Maryland and Virginia, and the Congress of the United States, this growing and well located metropolis of a great nation owes its existence.

I shall now proceed to inquire whether Congress have it in their power, by the operation of a simple majority, and by summary process, to transfer the seat of Government thus called into being by the Constitution. An attempt which, independent of a direct violation of that instrument, would inevitably arouse and fan into a flame those sectional and local feelings, against the direful effects of which the country has been so touchingly and wisely cautioned by the farewell address of the "Pater Patriæ."

I contend that Congress was merely employed as the agent through which the negotiation between the States and the Federal Government should first be carried on, and the selection and arrangements for its permanent residence should be afterwards effected; that all the power to be exercised under the section just quoted, being derived from the same and no other quarter whatever, it is necessarily restrained, limited, and explained thereby, and by nothing else; and, lastly, that the authority vested in the premises ceased and died when the object contemplated by the Constitution was carried into execution, the territory selected, and the Government actually established. It follows, from all this, that no act of Congress can bring back life into a measure which has worked out its mission, thus usurping creative powers belonging exclusively to a higher authority—the Constitution; that instrument merely assigned to its agent the task of accepting the necessary territory, of establishing its location, metes, and boundaries, and of exercising exclusive jurisdiction over the tract so ceded; and not one word in that section will authorize the conclusion that Congress, by the act of a mere majority, can frustrate the original designs of the Fathers of the Republic, by removing the metropolis so solemnly established and protected.

It is evident that whenever one individual receives a certain commission from another, the party so undertaking to execute the same is bound, if he be honest, competent, and faithful, to follow the instructions that may have been given for his guidance. Apply this rule to the present case, and it is equally evident that the duties assigned by the Constitution to Congress are clear, positive, and re-

strictive. Certain powers were given, certain acts required, and Congress, in the execution of this commission, was confined within fixed limits, was to accept a specified amount of territory, and by the acceptance, and the act establishing a *permanent* seat of Government, in accordance with the requisitions of the Constitution, bound itself to that instrument, to Maryland and Virginia, the owners, purchasers, and inhabitants of the District in question, and the people at large, by a positive engagement, to make the metropolis of the Union durable and unchangeable. Besides these evident facts, that Congress was, is, and must be restricted by the article under and by virtue whereof the powers, capacity, and acts necessary in the premises are vested and exercised, that so far as the selection of a seat of Government was concerned, its power ceased with the execution of the agency, and cannot be revived other than by the original creator, the Constitution; and that the obligations incurred with the two grantors aforesaid, and the original proprietors, purchasers, and inhabitants, are sacred and binding, the following reflection is worthy of consideration. The introduction of the word “permanent” in the act of 16th July, 1790, in contradistinction to “temporary” in the caption of said act, is, in my opinion, to be considered and rendered as conclusive against any further action for removing the present seat of Government on the part of that body. We learn from lexicographers that the word “permanent” means *durable; not decaying—unchanged; “permanency,” “continuance in the same state;”* “temporary,” on the other hand, is rendered as *“lasting only for a limited time.”* Now, Congress, by the aforesaid act, made Philadelphia an intermediate stage for a limited sojourn of ten years, until the *ultimate, durable, and unchanging* residence contemplated for the Government should be prepared and ready to receive it. The distinction made between Philadelphia and the District of Columbia, shows us at once the “animus” of those who legislated at New York—those who were concerned in passing the act of 1790, knew the English language as well, at least, as legislators of the present day. Their intentions are to be inferred from the language they used, and that language admits of no misconception or misrepresentation; they meant what they said; and not having vested in Congress the right to remove the Government at will, by any word or hint to be found in the article in question, of course it was never intended that they should

so exercise it. The absence of such permission necessarily excludes the power to change. The injunction by law to do anything, as a matter of course implies that the contrary is forbidden. If Congress have the privilege of originating any measure having in view a change in the seat of Government, that power either comes from the Constitution or from themselves; but, if from the Constitution, it would appear in that instrument, which is not the case; therefore the power is not derived from the Constitution. If Congress get the power from themselves, then they are superior to the Constitution and paramount in the land. But the Constitution is received as the law of the land, and in certain limits is undeniably paramount, as in the present case; therefore Congress do not receive the power from themselves. If, then, it be the fact, as it undeniably is, that the Constitution created the power exhausted by the selection of the proper site, &c., (that of legislation still existing and exercised,) and that the great Council of the nation is restricted in its operations in the premises, it follows that there is no possible mode of changing the section in question than by the constitutional means prescribed by that instrument itself.

It was their reliance and confidence in the solemn engagements of Congress, as set forth in the act of 1790, and in the protecting ægis of the Constitution, that induced the States of Maryland and Virginia to make the liberal cession and donations whereby this District was to some extent created. It was from the same motives and inducements that the original proprietors stripped themselves of their land, and proved themselves men of high public spirit and generosity. It was this confidence that persuaded people to come hither, and invest their labor and money, to stand or fall with the progress or misfortunes of their new homes. Had the States, proprietors, and purchasers been aware that the important subject of a change of the seat of Government would be considered a question "sub judice," an open question for the experiments of selfish and ill-judging politicians, I feel assured that no such alacrity and liberality would have been evinced, but that instead of willing parties, Congress would have found them reluctant and difficult of persuasion. If the growth of this metropolis and the interests of this District have been retarded, the cause, it seems to me, is, to a considerable extent, to be discovered in the attempts made at several times to remove the seat of Government, and to a certain

degree of apprehension now prevailing here and elsewhere that such attempts may be repeated.

I want this subject laid at rest, and that the people at large should feel convinced of the following points: 1st. That the Constitution gave Congress *limited* powers in the premises, and that body, as a mere agent, is bound by instructions and limitations, and can, under no circumstances, exercise more authority than is given to that effect by the Constitution. 2d. That a change of the seat of Government would be a violation of the implied contract between the Federal Government and the States of Maryland and Virginia, which never would have made the necessary grants had not *permanency* been guarantied by solemn act of Congress. 3d. That the rights and reasonable expectations of the original proprietors, the purchasers, and inhabitants of this District would be trifled with and destroyed by such a move, towards transferring the metropolis elsewhere, on the part of those who falsely imagine themselves clothed with the necessary power and capacity.

In my next, gentlemen, I shall say a few words on the expediency and policy of keeping the seat of Government where it now is, and ever should be, and then endeavor to show that, so far from having done too much for this city, Congress have not exercised that full liberality and justice which policy and the rights of the inhabitants demand.

Until then I remain, as usual, yours, truly,

J. C. B.

THE DUTIES AND RELATIONS OF CONGRESS TO THE CITY OF WASHINGTON.

LETTER No. XV.

WASHINGTON, *April 29, 1844.*

GENTLEMEN: I trust that I have succeeded in establishing the points I made in my last number: 1st. That the Constitution and the acts of Congress, in pursuance of the privileges and directions thereby given and prescribed, completely protect the present seat of Government, and forbid any interference, direct or indirect, with the subject, except by the usual mode for altering an article of that Constitution. 2d. That the implied engagements between the Federal Government and the States of Virginia and Maryland; the

meaning and established acceptance of the word "permanent," used by the act of Congress referred to, and the understanding with the original proprietors, in the first place, and the subsequent and still existing obligations of the Government with the citizens of the District, in the second, all serve, in the most positive and clear manner, to show that the foundations of this metropolis must be durable and unchanging. If I have been so fortunate as to sustain my propositions, it follows that it is idle, inexpedient, impolitic, and unconstitutional, even to broach the subject in Congress, the matter not being within the jurisdiction of that body. All the attempts, therefore, that have been made to effect a removal, were in opposition to the words and meaning of the Constitution, and the unwarrantable interference of persons having no concern or power in the premises. If, then, it be the fact that such was the character of attempts of the kind in past times, it follows, of course, that the same objections must attach to any move of that description for the future.

If the subject of removal be fenced round and protected, even from discussion in Congress, by the Constitution, and the other reasons I have hurriedly proposed, it is equally clear that any attempt at *retrocession* is open to the same objections. It being established that no other power than the Constitution can effect a *removal*, it must strike every reflecting mind that Congress should not, and cannot, alienate any portion of the District; for the Constitution protects the whole, and forbids any action whatever in the matter, except by its direction, or by a change made constitutionally in the article calling this District into being. But no such direction having been given, nor such change made, it follows that neither Congress, nor any other power than that of the Constitution, can effect such retrocession, in part or in whole. Those who have desired, or who may desire, a removal of the seat of Government or a retrocession, do not, and cannot, go to the Constitution for their power. They think that a mere act of Congress is sufficient for the purpose, without appealing to the means provided for by that glorious charter of our freedom, when it is attempted to change any of its articles or stipulations. And I ask, in all fairness, whether such a course is respectful to the Constitution, justice to the people, or a good precedent to set in a matter of so much public interest and importance, as the uncalled for intermeddling with constitu

tional pledges, injunctions, and guaranties? If it be wrong to re-transfer the *whole* District to the original owners, Maryland and Virginia, and to remove the seat of Government, I ask can it be less wrong and unconstitutional to cede back a portion? If the subject be, as it is, protected against the unwarranted interference of Congress, by the Constitution and the act of Congress itself, I should like to know, how can the right be asserted of being authorized to fritter away the District; thus doing by piece-meal what cannot be effected by the whole? ..

But even granting, by way of argument, that Congress may, and can, of its own power and innate capacity in this matter, originate and carry into effect an act for the removal of the seat of Government, I ask whether it be consistent with the Constitution, or a republican form of administration, to take advantage of the fact that the citizens of this District are not directly represented in Congress, and transfer them to and fro without their consent, and even against their wishes and interests? If such be the case, then I understand liberty, the representative system, the checks, and advantages of a republican form of Government, and the Constitution by which we live and have our being, in a manner too large and liberal even for this liberal country of ours. If I have been taught aright, I have learned that the principal cause of the separation of the then colonies from the mother country, is to be found in reasoning the very reverse to that urged by these friends of Congressional omnipotence. Our fathers asserted, and in support of that assertion pledged their "lives, fortunes, and sacred honor," that taxes and burdens imposed upon them by a Parliament where they had no voice or influence, were illegal and oppressive. That those great, wise, and good men who achieved our freedom did right, I suppose no one, at least who lives under the institutions they wrote, fought, and bled for, will dare to deny. Now I ask you, members of Congress, and fellow-citizens, are you ready to act in the matter of the removal or retrocession of the District, or a part thereof, as did the bad men who in the last century directed the destinies of Great Britain? Are you prepared to violate the Constitution, trifle with the pledged faith of the nation, do an injury to Maryland and Virginia, and set at defiance the protests, wishes, and prayers of those who have settled in these Ten Miles Square, confiding in the protection of that sacred instrument and the good faith of the Govern-

ment? If so, then let the issue be joined at once. I am half inclined to believe it better to have the subject decided, even although we be the victims of such gross injustice, than to keep Congressional omnipotency in the premises, suspended over our devoted heads, like the sword of Damocles, by a hair. Suspense is always painful—uncertainty always a check upon enterprise, and a barrier to improvement. The citizens of this much neglected and abused District have a right to ask that you will respect the Constitution, and confess, candidly and at once, that the matter has been expressly put by that instrument beyond the control and jurisdiction of the Representatives of the people at the Capitol. My word for it, if once it be established that no process, other than that prescribed by the Constitution, can remove the seat of Government from this District, a new impetus will be given to its progress and prosperity—a new era will dawn upon its fortunes.

The remarks of the editor of the National Intelligencer in 1814, when the subject of a *temporary* removal of the seat of Government was before Congress, apply with so much more force to any attempt at a *permanent* one, that I feel myself called upon to appropriate them in the present case. He says: "To circumscribe this question by the narrow limits of this city, or of these Ten Miles Square, to consider it only in relation to its injurious, if not ruinous, influence on the people of this city and District, or even on the adjoining population of Maryland and Virginia, is to place it in the most obscure and feeble light in which it can be viewed. The interests of the Union are involved in it; it was a question as interesting to the Province of Maine as to the State of Georgia. The seat of Government was solemnly located with a view to its central position, and to other circumstances intimately connected with certain early acts of the Government which entered into the compact or compromise in consequence of which the seat of Government was settled here. To remove it now, would be almost to deracinate the principle of several of the most important of the first acts of the Government, and would have warranted their abrogation, if a majority could be found so regardless of the honor and good faith of the nation as to have sanctioned it."

The remarks of Gouverneur Morris, whose authority in such matters must be respected as of great weight, apply also so directly to the subject I am treating, that I will make use of them for my pur-

poses. Speaking on the repeal of the Judiciary act, he observes: "When you have by law created a *political existence*, can you, by 'repealing the law, dissolve the corporation you had made? No; 'when you make a contract, you are bound by it. When you make 'a promise you must perform it; the Constitution says you shall 'make no *ex post facto* law."

Now the seat of Government is a *political existence*, therefore it cannot be dissolved. There are contracts with Maryland and Virginia, the people of the United States, the original proprietors, and the citizens of this District, therefore the country and Congress are bound by them. No *ex post facto* law can be constitutionally passed; but a removal of the metropolis or a retrocession would be *ex post facto*, therefore no such act can be passed without violating the Constitution.

I believe with that fast friend of this District, the late much regretted Hon. Joseph Pearson, of North Carolina, when he exclaimed on the floor of Congress, "the Fathers of the Republic intended 'the seat of the Government of the United States should, when 'established, be as perpetual as the union of these States, as durable as the Constitution itself."

In proving the unconstitutionality, illegality, and injustice of any attempt at a removal or retrocession of this District, in part or in whole, I have almost rendered any remarks on the subject of expediency superfluous. But let a few suffice. If the people of heathen Athens harkened to the advice of Aristides, when he exclaimed, speaking of a certain measure, that "it was expedient but nothing more unjust," I cannot for a moment suppose that in a christian country *expediency* will be preferred to *justice*.

Let those who have the might, but not the right, be cautious how they desecrate the spot hallowed by the choice and the name of the father of his country! Let those who, from sinister or other motives, desire a removal reflect, that here, centuries ago, an imaginative pioneer of civilization recalled the old world, and the glories of ancient Rome, by giving this region the name of the seven-hilled city, and christening the small stream which flows in our midst the Tiber. Let no rash man presume to disturb this happy omen, for the finger of Providence is visible in the case. Let us, on the contrary, fondly hope that the greatness and the power of the old mistress of the world, without its crimes, will descend as an

inheritance on the spot honored with the name of Washington, where its former glories are recalled by a Capitol, a Senate of Conscript Fathers, and by the existence of a Republic far purer and more enduring than the offspring of the wolf-nursed children of Rhea—(1.)

It would be highly impolitic and unwise, in my opinion, to excite a political storm in the country by the agitation of the subject, and it is to aid in preventing such a contingency that I warn my fellow citizens against the danger. It would be calling into existence all the worst feelings of human nature, and would add fresh fuel to the flames of sectional interests, personal considerations, and party zeal. And even did Congress actually agree upon a removal, how could it possibly be settled where it should be transferred? Is it to be imagined that the west, the east, the north, and the south will not all be anxious for the prize? Will it not, therefore, be a struggle of the worst and most direful character? Better let well alone, than flee to ills we know not of. We have a seat of Government selected and located by solemn act of Congress, under and by virtue of powers vested for the purpose by the Constitution. The District so selected has been ever since growing in importance, wealth, and population. The Government has erected buildings for its own accommodation at great expense, and has many more still to construct. Railroads, steamboats, and the electro-magnetic telegraph, (which is now nearly completed as far as Baltimore, and for which magnificent application of a wonderful power in nature the thanks of this country and the world are due to Professor Morse, its ingenious and able inventor,) have brought, and will bring still more, this city within easy journeys of every section of the Union, and thus make mere distance a matter of little moment. The city of Washington is within convenient distance from the seaboard, and therefore well suited for the supervision and management of our navy and foreign relations. The District is protected from the dangers of an improper popular influence on the debates of Congress by the vicinity of a dense and growing population, an evil foreseen and guarded against by the Constitution when it gave to Congress *exclusive jurisdiction* over these Ten Miles Square. The "Star of Empire," the tide of emigration westward takes its way; and if we have a regard for the stability of our institutions, the location of the metropolis of the Republic will be ever kept at a

distance from the chances of popular excitement and control. The improvements in internal communications, whereby the expense and duration of travel from every quarter of the Union are diminished almost to an incredible extent, more than counterbalance the enlargement of the limits of population, and confirm the assertion of Dr. Patterson, of the United States Mint, at Philadelphia, in his interesting address on the "Centre of Population," before the late Scientific and Literary Convention of the National Institute in this city, that "the choice of Washington as the Capitol of the Union was judiciously made." Such being the case, such the advantages resulting from that judicious selection, let us be cautious how we disturb the subject, and raise a storm difficult to allay. Let the spot hallowed by the name of Washington, and foreshadowed as the seat of Government for the Great Republic of the West by its primitive names of Rome and Tiber, be deemed a holy thing, protected against political pollution by all the best feelings of our nature as lovers of liberty and order.

Yours, truly, &c.,

J. C. B.

(1.) The survey here referred to being deemed of sufficient interest to be inserted, I have thought it proper to give an authentic copy made from the original manuscript in the Mayor's office at the City Hall. It is as follows:

The following is an authentic copy of the original manuscript in the Mayor's office, being the survey thus referred to:

JUNE 5th, 1663.—Laid out for Francis Pope, of this Province, gentleman, a parcel of land in Charles county called Room, lying on the east side of the Anacostia river, beginning with a marked oak standing by the river side, the bounded tree of Capt. Robert Troop, and running north by the river for breadth and length 200 ps., to a bounded oak standing at the mouth of a bay or inlet called Tiber; bounding on the north by the said belt, and line drawn east for the length of 320 ps., to a bounded tree standing in the woods; on the east, with a line drawn south from the end of the former line, until you meet with the exterior bounded tree of Robt. Troop, called Scotland Yard; on the south, with the said land; on the west, with the said river, containing, and now laid out for, 400 acres, more or less.

JUNE 5th, 1663.—Laid out for Cap. Robt. Troop, of this province, a parcel of land in Charles county called Scotland Yard, lying on the east side of the Anacostia river, beginning at a bounded hickory standing by the river side, and running north by the river for breadth the length of 250 ps., to a bounded oak; bounding on the north with a line drawn east into the woods for the length of 320 ps., to a bounded oak; on the east, with a line drawn south from the end of the former line, until you intersect a parallel line drawn from the first bounded hickory; on the south, with the said parallel; on the west, with said river, containing, and now laid out for, 500 acres, more or less.

Below is written: Valuable and ancient documents in relation to the taking up of the tract of land called *Rome*, on the site of which now stands the city of Washington, respectfully presented to the Mayor and Councils of the city by

ROB. Y. BRENT.

APRIL 26, 1837.

THE DUTIES AND RELATIONS OF CONGRESS TO THE CITY OF WASHINGTON.—PERSICO'S STATUES.

LETTER No. XVI.

WASHINGTON, *May 20, 1844.*

GENTLEMEN: In order to show that Congress have exercised but little liberality in their legislation towards this District and city, I beg leave to suggest the following points: In the 1st place, Government, by an understanding between the parties, engaged to apply the proceeds of sales of the public lots towards making streets, bridges, and other improvements, but has almost entirely failed to comply with said agreement. 2dly. Government, in addition to the violation of this understanding, has paid no taxes on its property, amounting to upwards of \$7,000,000, and scarcely contributed any thing towards District and city improvements, but has left, although receiving as a gift from the original proprietors four-fifths of the land covered by the plan of the city, about 30 miles of streets and bridges, and 2,000,000 feet of paved way, to be paid by self-taxation by its citizens. 3dly. The plan of the city, made by Government without consultation with the settlers, creating avenues and streets 100 to 160 feet wide, and embracing an area of 7,134 acres, necessarily forced upon the inhabitants the necessity of supporting great burdens. Of these 7,134 acres, Government retained as reservations 4,118 for streets, avenues, &c.; and of these 7,134 acres, paid the proprietors but for 512, at the rate of £25 per acre, and returned to them half of the building lots, (1,058 acres,) thus keeping 5,114 acres as a free gift. 4thly. Government having the right of soil and exclusive jurisdiction in the premises, was and is bound in consequence to make all necessary improvements, and in so doing, places this city under no particular pecuniary obligations, but simply complies with the dictates of duty—equal benefits create equal burdens and expenditures. 5thly. As no private efforts or means could create sufficient accommodations for Government and Congress, by making roads, avenues, streets, bridges, lighting streets, &c., &c., the duty did and does devolve upon Congress and the nation. 6thly. The sum of \$3,638,505 has been raised from and expended by this city, in the benefits whereof the Government has had a large share. 7thly. Had Government paid taxes in due proportion from the establishment of the Metropolis to the

present time, the amount so disbursed would be nearly \$3,000,000. This sum has gone into the public Treasury, almost entire, with the exception of the \$10,000 expended on macademising Pennsylvania avenue, and paving in front of, and enclosing its own property. 8thly. Although Government has relieved the city, to some extent, by taking off its hands the principal of the Holland debt, upon the hypothecation of the stock subscribed by the Corporation in the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, to the amount of \$1,000,000, which stock Government now holds as security, still it evinced its confidence in said investment by having taken a large amount previously, and, at the time of receiving the transfer of the corporation stock, was considered to have got at least an equivalent and good security for the advance in question. It must also be borne in mind, that the interest paid by the Washington city corporation, up to the time of said transfer, must be considered as so much lost, as also the interest paid on the money borrowed to pay that interest, amounting to \$700,000. 9thly. In addition to what Government has received from the original proprietors, and the large extent of ground it still holds for public purposes, as a free gift, and besides the \$800,000, proceeds of sales of the building lots given by their owners for the improvement of the city, it has also accepted \$120,000 from Virginia, and \$72,000 from Maryland; the money so given, the sums collected since, and taxes remitted, &c., have all been spent for the benefit of distant sections of the country, and scarcely any portion of the proceeds has been disbursed for that of this city. 10thly. The appropriations for public buildings and learned and charitable institutions within the District, should not be charged to the account of the city, for all these improvements were for the accommodation of the public authorities, and therefore of national concern; and the philanthropic acts of Congress, for the benefit of the nation at large, ought not to be made a burden upon the District.

My readers will and must conclude, from the simple enumeration of the foregoing facts which are matters of statistical and historical accuracy and truth, that upon the settlement of the account between the General Government and this District, a large balance will be found due to the latter; thus contradicting most clearly the assertion of its enemies in Congress and out, who desire to place its inhabitants in the attitude of mendicants and suitors for national

charity and support. To make the position I have taken still stronger, that the people of this District ask but for what is strictly and justly due them, and that the charge of mendicity is false and libellous, I beg the serious and impartial attention of the public to the following synopsis of the able report made by the late Mr. Southard, Chairman of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, on the memorial of the corporate authorities and inhabitants of the city of Washington, and that of Georgetown. The date of the report is February 2, 1835, vide 23d Congress, 2d session—(97.)

The committee reported, that the embarrassment of the city was not caused by the imprudence or extravagance of the inhabitants and city authorities to the extent anticipated, and that the views by which they were governed were of a liberal and public spirited character. That neither the Government nor the proprietors contemplated that the whole or even a large proportion of the burden should be thrown upon the inhabitants of the city. That the Government is bound by every principle of equal right and justice, to pay a proportion of the expense incurred in this matter equal to the amount of the property which it held, and which was to be increased in value and benefitted by it, and this would have been greatly more than one-half. That it was anticipated, at the date of the contract, that the property acquired by Government would become immensely productive, enabling it to secure a perfect accommodation for itself, and “insure a considerable surplus to the city to be employed in its improvement;” the city therefore ought not to be regarded as inexcusably importunate when it asks for their alleviation. That the city may have gone further in this matter than the necessities or convenience of the Government may for the time being have required; but the expenditures were made with the generous purpose of increasing the public accommodation, and rendering the capitol of the country what it ought to be, as well to augment the property held by individuals, and by the Government itself, and the improvements which it has made have greatly enhanced both. That in several States of the Union, where the Government holds landed estate, it has paid taxes on it, whilst in the city of Washington it has not. That, although in the acts of incorporation, which gave the city partial control and regulation over the streets, there is no exemption of the property of the Govern-

ment from taxation, thereby leaving it to be inferred that Congress did not intend that it should be exempted, but that it should be equally subject to those burdens necessary for the common benefit of the whole; the corporate authorities, with prudence and propriety, abstained from levying taxes upon it, and laid the whole weight upon that part of the property which belonged to individuals. That the only appropriation which appears to have been made exclusively for the city, was that of \$100,000 for the canal which unites the Potomac and Eastern Branch; and yet even this was a concern originally belonging to the Government, which it directed, and over which its commissioners had control both as to its location and execution. The committee united in a recommendation that Congress should transfer their private building lots to the city, making thus all taxable alike.

The report concludes with this impressive language: "In the investigation of the subject committed to them, and of the relief proposed, the committee have been unable to separate the interests of the District from the interests of the United States. They regard it as the child of the Union—as the creation of the Union for its own purposes. The design of the Constitution and its founders was, to create a residence for the Government where they should have absolute and unlimited control. In accomplishing their object, the Union undertook the guardianship of the District, deprived its inhabitants of the right of self-government, and of the elective franchise, and made them dependent upon the will of the Representatives of the States, to whom alone they can look for relief. But the committee do not propose, in the present instance, to offer to the Senate a project for the relief of the embarrassments by which this city is now afflicted, which will call upon the Union for the expenditure of any of the treasure which has been drawn from the pockets of its citizens, but only for a part of the funds which were obtained by the agreement to locate the seat of Government here, and which are not necessary to replenish the Treasury of a nation, rich, free from debt, and competent to the most abundant provision for the accommodation of its public authorities."

If the facts and conclusions, thus succinctly stated, do not clearly establish the positions that the people of this District have a peculiar and strong claim upon the protection and liberality of the

Government ; that so far but a very small modicum of the notice and aid to which they have so just a right has been their lot, and great injustice done by accusing them of being importunate suitors and mendicants, then human language must be weak and unintelligible, indeed, and I have read and construed the statistics relating to the affairs of these Ten Miles Square, and the opinions of the committee from which I have quoted, with a mind blinded by partiality and prejudice. But such is not the case. I defy any person, at all open to reason and conviction, or free from prejudices, to rise from the perusal of such information as has been accumulated on the subject, without being struck by the fact, that the metropolis of the Union has had unfair play ; that its history is, with slight exceptions, but the narrative of unkind and unmerited Congressional neglect, or positive hostility and insult, and a heavy balance is yet due upon account between it and the public authorities who seem to be so careless and indifferent, to speak most charitably, in a matter which appeals most particularly to their sympathies, consciences, and feelings. Would that the District had ever such friends as Campbell, of South Carolina, Pratt, of New York, Bayard, of Delaware, Causin, of Maryland, and Chilton, of Virginia ! Then would the public be spared the painful spectacle of seeing a suffering community trifled with, insulted, and rebuffed by selfish politicians, when they ask for charters for their banks, improvements on the public grounds and buildings, repairs for their dusty and worn out streets and avenues, and appropriations for humane and charitable institutions. Then would the good old spirit of the Fathers of the Republic be once more evoked to bless and cheer us in our disfranchised and helpless condition ; and the city which Washington founded and so dearly loved and cherished—which a Jefferson, an Adams, a Madison, and a Monroe so watched over and cared for—once again lift its bowed head from the melancholy attitude of a mourner, and be rewarded for years of trouble and neglect by a return of that friendly and liberal legislation and Government protection to which it has been so long a stranger.

Before bringing these hasty essays to a close, I deem it my duty, as it is my pleasure, to take brief notice of a masterpiece of sculpture lately elevated to its position on the eastern portico of the Capitol. In the execution of his task, Persico has succeeded most triumphantly. No one who has a heart to feel, a taste to guide, or

a head to judge, can gaze upon the imposing and beautiful statues of Columbus and the Indian Girl, without emotions of admiration and delight. The artist has conveyed most happily in stone the attributes of dignity, enthusiasm, firmness, and genius, with which we associate the character and person of the Great Navigator. He has completed the poetical and historical eloquence of the group by lending to the face, figure, and position of the admiring, shrinking, curious, and artless inhabitant of the newly discovered world, an expression in lineament, limb, and attitude, which cannot be surpassed in felicity and beauty. I leave to others, who have more time and space than myself, to venture upon a detailed criticism of this chef d'œuvre, and shall be content for the present with congratulating the country that we possess at the metropolis of the Union sculpture so superior and beautiful as the productions of Persico and Greenough. May this be but the beginning of a well sustained and directed patronage of artists, native and foreign, on the part of our Government, and merit, such as that of the two distinguished sculptors alluded to particularly, meet with flattering and honorable reward!

Before I take my final leave of the public, I may be excused for inserting a compliment to the resident inhabitants of the metropolis, which will, I trust, fall pleasantly and gratefully on the ears of those in honor of whom it was penned, and make them ambitious of ever proving themselves worthy of the flattering tribute of the writer: "It may be fashionable," says the correspondent of the New York Aurora, "nay, it may be excellent republican taste, to 'jeer and deride our National Capital,—a city consecrated to Liberty and hallowed by the name of 'the Father of his Country,'—but 'to me Washington has a thousand charms. I love its people. It 'is true they are not rich, neither are they numerous; but they 'have the frank, hospitable character of their noble Maryland and 'Virginia ancestors; and though at times, and at all times, the vice 'and pollution, the heartlessness and villany, the turpitude and 'sycophancy of all the rest of the Union, pour into it in immeasurable streams, still, in despite of all this, the native and resident population of Washington, on the score of public and private morals, may safely challenge competition with the proudest and 'most lauded cities of America and the world.'"

I have now done, and if perchance these lucubrations produce

even a very small portion of the effect they are intended to bring about, I shall be most delighted and well rewarded as a citizen of the District, and as an American who asks and wishes for naught that is not a national blessing and advantage.

Yours, respectfully,

J. C. B.

LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL
INSTITUTE.

LETTER XVII.

WASHINGTON, *May 25, 1844.*

GENTLEMEN: There has been no event, in my opinion, for a long time past, that ought to be deemed more interesting and important, by the scientific and intelligent portions of the community, than the late Convention of the National Institute, which commenced its sessions in this city on Monday, the 1st of April of the present year.

The reunion for good and useful purposes, under the auspices, and at the invitation of an association devoted to intellectual pursuits, of those of our fellow-citizens who direct the powers of their minds to the improvement of their species, is well fitted to bring forth fruit of the best and most useful description. That a large number of men should have been found willing to leave their avocations and families, and for no other end than to indulge in the communion of mind, and to aim at something for the benefit of their common country, should have journeyed hither from great distances, at no small expense and sacrifice, argues well for their zeal and enthusiasm, and is sufficient proof of the existence amongst us of a body most respectable and progressing, as to size, patriotism, and attainments. That the proceedings of the Convention gave satisfaction to the community who honored the sessions by a regular and select attendance, and afforded proof to the public that the addresses and papers were of no common merit and interest, is what no one who has had an opportunity of judging will presume to deny. Honored by the presence of many of the first savans and intellectual men in the land—rendered attractive and instructive by the selection and distribution of the matters then discussed—characterized throughout by the cordial and agreeable intercourse of the guests and their flattered hosts, it is no idle assertion to

remark, that the late scientific and literary meeting, of the proceedings whereof I give the following synopsis, will be considered an epoch in the intellectual history of this country, if its objects be carried out by a publication of the essays here enumerated, and this be established as the first of a series of successful and well arranged annual reunions, under the auspices of the National Institute at the seat of Government.

FIRST DAY.

The first session of the literary and scientific Convention of the National Institute took place at Washington city, on Monday, the 1st April, 1844, and was opened by a short, but clear and interesting statement of the objects of the meeting, by his excellency John Tyler, President of the United States, followed by an able and eloquent address of the Hon. Mr. Walker, "on the progress, improvements, and present condition of American science in all its branches." The exercises were closed by Professor Draper, of New York, by a paper "on the physical constitution of the rays of the Sun," and by Professor Loomis, of Ohio, "on the late comet."

2d DAY.—TUESDAY, APRIL 2d.—Hon. Levi Woodbury in the chair. Dr. H. Humphreys, President of St. John's college, Annapolis, read a paper "on the economy of science in relation to our Government." Professor Benjamin Hallowell, of Alexandria, D. C., "on the liberation of caloric, in some chemical changes, that are attended with an enlargement of bulk." Lieut. M. F. Maury, U. S. N., "on the Gulf stream, and the currents of the ocean;" and Professor George Tucker, of the University of Virginia, "on the dangers most to be guarded against in the future progress of the United States."

3d DAY.—WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3d—*Morning Session*.—Dr. Humphreys in the chair. Professor J. G. Morris, of Baltimore, delivered an essay "on the past and present state of entomology in the United States;" Professor R. M. McCulloch, late of Jefferson college, Pennsylvania, a paper "on the attraction of a planet upon a material point in space;" William B. Hodgson, of Georgia, "on the Megatherioid fossils of the Atlantic coast of Georgia;" Professor Morris read a paper written by Professor E. Foreman, of Baltimore, "on domestic exchanges in Natural History and Geology;" Captain A. Mordecai, U. S. ordnance corps, closed with an article

explanatory "of a ballistic pendulum, constructed at the Washington arsenal for experiments in gunnery."

4th MEETING.—WEDNESDAY EVENING.—Hon. John C. Spencer, Secretary of the Treasury, in the chair. The proceedings were opened by an essay of Professor A. D. Bache, superintendent of the United States coast survey, "on the history of science in Europe and the United States;" Professor Jacobs, of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, followed with a paper "on the Indian Summer;" Dr. A. D. Challoner, of Philadelphia, with one "on the petrified forest near Cairo, in Egypt, discovered by Linant, chief engineer and hydrographer to the Pacha."

5th DAY.—5th MEETING, THURSDAY, APRIL 4th—*Morning Session*.—Hon R. J. Walker in the chair. Peter A. Browne opened exercises by a paper "on improved method of teaching the natural sciences;" Professor W. W. Mather, of Ohio, "on the physical geography of the United States;" Professor C. Gill, of Flushing, New York, concluded the proceedings by an essay "on the improvement of mathematical science, and the consequent advancement of the natural sciences."

6th MEETING.—THURSDAY—*Evening Session*.—Honorable John C. Spencer in the chair. Dr. Nott, President of Union college, Schenectady, New York, delivered an essay "on the origin, duration, and end of the world;" Professor J. H. Agnew, of New York, "on the Glacier system, or period of Agassez."

7th MEETING.—FRIDAY MORNING, APRIL 5th.—The Hon. B. F. Butler, of New York, in the chair. Professor Locke, of Cincinnati, commenced this day's exercises with a paper "on the meteorology, magnetism, topography, scenery, geology, &c., of Lake Superior, and its vicinity;" Professor W. A. Norton, of Newark, Delaware, read one "on the Nebular hypothesis;" Captain W. H. Swift, U. S. topographical engineers, "a description of the base line of Long Island, measured in the year 1843, for the survey of the coast of the United States;" and Dr. Sewall, of Washington, "an essay on the design and utility of the Medical Department of the National Institute."

8th MEETING.—SATURDAY, APRIL 6th—*Morning Session*.—Hon. JOSEPH R. INGERSOLL, of Philadelphia, in the Chair.

F. J. GRUND, of Philadelphia, read an essay "on the modern historical schools of France and Germany, and the philosophy of

the United States." Professor W. R. JOHNSON, of Philadelphia, "on the scientific character and researches of the late James Smithson." Professor BACHE read paper written by the Rev. JAMES CURLEY, of Georgetown College, entitled "description of a meridian circle for the College Observatory." Dr. W. H. VAN BUREN, U. S. A., "on the effects of Quinine on the human body, as a remedial agent." Dr. J. R. W. DUNBAR, of Baltimore, finished proceedings "on the importance of Physiology as a branch of general education."

9th MEETING.—MONDAY, 8th APRIL—*Morning Session*.—The Hon. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, upon taking the Chair, delivered a short and pertinent address, for which I refer my readers to the National Intelligencer of Tuesday, April 9th.

The Corresponding Secretary, FRANCIS MARKOE, esq., announced the names of the delegates appointed by the societies and colleges of the United States, and read the following papers, some only by their titles, and others in full: "Letter from the Hon. Levi Woodbury, highly approving the purposes of the National Institute; from Rev. Dr. Wayland, of Brown University, Providence, suggesting the communication to the National Institute of observations on the atmosphere, to be made by the captains of packets and other vessels; from Dr. Foreman, of Baltimore, communicating a recommendation that Messrs. Torrey and Gray, authors of the *Flora Americana*, should be invited to prepare for the next annual meeting of the Institute a summary account of what has been done in this country in the promotion of botanical knowledge, with biographical sketches, &c. Letters from Professor Johnson, of Middletown, Connecticut, and Professor Tutmiller, of Lagrange College, Alabama, containing useful suggestions; and from George R. Chase, U. S. Top. Engs., of Pensacola, on "method of settling the orthography and orthoepy of the English language;" from Professor G. S. Haldeman, of the Franklin Institute, of Philadelphia, "on the necessity of a National Institution for the encouragement of science;" from Francis Lieber, L. L. D., of Columbia, South Carolina, containing "remarks on public executions, &c.;" from Professor James Hamilton, of the University of Nashville, Tennessee, "on certain meteorological facts observed at Nashville;" and from the Hon. Richard Rush, of Philadelphia, "on the Smithsonian Bequest." Professor Espy submitted some remarks "on Meteorology." Professor Bache read a communication from Dr. Robert Hare, of the University of Pennsylvania, calling for observations

on the late storm, and a paper of his own on "magnetic and meteorological observations made, under direction of the War Department, at the Observatory of Philadelphia." He then laid before the meeting, by authority of the Treasury Department, "proof impressions of five sheets of the map of New York bay and harbour, surveyed under the superintendence of F. R. Hassler, late superintendent of the United States coast survey, and forming part of the survey of the coast." Francis Markoe then read a paper from J. C. Pickett, U. S. Chargé d'Affaires at Lima, giving an account of some remarkable ruins in the Provinces of Chachapoyas, Peru. John Tyler, jr., delivered an essay "in support of the theory of an electric fluid, by an explanation of the phenomena of the repulsion of pith balls negatively electrified."

The 10th and last meeting took place on Monday evening, 8th April, the Hon. J. C. SPENCER in the Chair.

Dr. Patterson, of the United States Mint, Philadelphia, delivered a discourse "on the centre of population of the United States," and was followed by the Hon. A. H. Everett, "on the moral tendency of the science and learning of the past and present centuries."

The proceedings of the First Annual Convention of the National Institute were then closed by an able address from the Chairman, the Hon. John C. Spencer.

If such meetings be deemed useful and interesting, it becomes, then, the duty and interest of the learned men of this country to support and encourage the National Institute, and of the intelligent portion of the community to give it countenance and assistance. For upon such support and countenance depends the contingency, whether there shall ever be another convention of the kind, and whether the Institute will be enabled to carry into operation its laudable and enterprising intentions. We say, then, to those who feel a direct interest in such matters, that the resident members of the Institute hope, if Congress give a favorable hearing to the memorial now before them, to make the next convention, should one be held here, of still greater attraction and importance. I trust, then, that, for one, I shall again have the pleasure of attending, before a twelve-month goes by, another meeting of the kind, and of seeing a still greater number of learned delegates gathered in our city in communion so delightful and instructive.

Yours, respectfully,

J. C. B.

[Letters 14, 15, 16, and 17, were not published in the *Intelligencer*.]

